SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
3 2911 04630 7989

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY 11699516
rance and the French,
14.4.H88F
3 2911 00749978 3

c.2.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
FOUNDED A.D. 1870
SUOS CULTORES SCIENTIA CORONAT

SYRACUSE
UNIVERSITY

914.4
Huddleston H88f
c.2

France and the French

295383

20Sep'44A
LH

DATE LOANED

23Aug43S

20Sep'44A

8 APR '57 LD

23Sep'44B

29 MAY 57 LD

please group plef

22Jan'46NY

13 Oct'54HE pd

23May'55RG

21Apr'58BY

Canell

15May'58MA

28 JUL 64NK

23 OCT '65 DS 10/3 10-4

OCT 19 1992

SEP 22 1992

MAY 31 1994 BIRD

JAN 3 1994

FRANCE AND THE FRENCH

By

SISLEY HUDDLESTON

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1925

MADE & PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY BUTLER & TANNER LTD
FROME AND
LONDON

DC
39
H8

CONTENTS

Book I: Social and Intellectual

1. IS THERE A NEW FRANCE? 13
2. THE PERILS OF THRIFT 23
3. MASQUERADES AND MILITARISM 33
4. CRIME AND PUNISHMENT 42
5. FOSTERING FAMILY LIFE 47
6. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FRENCHWOMAN 57
7. A PICTURE OF THE PEASANT 68
8. TYPES OF TOWN DWELLERS 79
9. A SURVEY OF THE PRESS 88
10. THE LITERARY FERMENT 99
11. AT THE THEATRE 114
12. ART AND ARCHITECTURE 128
13. MUSICAL TENDENCIES 146
14. SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY 156
15. EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS 166

Book II: Political and Economic

1. THE CONSTITUTION 185
2. CHAMBER AND SENATE 194
3. FOREIGN POLICY 210
4. THE FIGHTING FORCES 237
5. POPULATION AND IMMIGRATION 250
6. CHURCH AND STATE 263
7. A FRANCO-GERMAN TRUST? 276
8. THE ECONOMIC REVOLUTION 288
9. COLONIAL ENTERPRISE 300
10. FRANCE'S FORTUNE AND STATE FINANCES 308
11. TAXATION – DIRECT AND INDIRECT 320
12. THE PROBLEM OF INFLATION 328
13. FOREIGN DEBTS 335

295383

PREFACE

I HAVE been pressed to write this book, and although it has proved to be an exceedingly heavy task, it has been a labour of love. I have sought, after no inconsiderable experience of the French and after a long study of French problems, to show them as they are to-day. There are necessarily many omissions. Many of the subjects I have dealt with would, for their complete elucidation, require not chapters but volumes. Nevertheless I have attempted to make this account as comprehensive and as complete as may well be.

There appears to be need for such a book because undoubtedly considerable changes have followed in the wake of the War. These changes are to be found in social conditions, in politics, and in economics. I have endeavoured to trace the general character of the French people, though aware that generalizations must always be unsatisfactory and to some extent untrue: but I hope that some fresh understanding will be obtained of this lovable race whose ways are different from our ways.

To the central facts of family life and to the position of the Frenchwoman I have devoted particular attention; and have marked the distinguishing features of the country-dweller and the town-dweller – peasant, artisan, bourgeois, and the remaining representatives of the old nobility.

To the French Press, the French theatre, French music, philosophy and science, in so far as they have been influenced by the War, chapters are given. There are sections on the modern development of art; on education as it has been affected by the cataclysm; on the newer literature and generally upon the intellectual movements. The political forces and the personalities of the politicians have not been neglected.

The demand for security is shown to be the key to French policy, and it has therefore been necessary to examine the present condition of the Army and Navy and of the Air Service.

Problems such as those of the declining French population and the consequent need for sound rules of immigration are analysed,

I have glanced at the recent religious controversy which may prove to be the pivot of internal politics.

The European struggle for coal and iron, on which may turn the issues of war and peace, is examined at some length. Nothing is more striking than the economic progress accomplished by France since the War, and it is along this path that the future of France may lie. A remarkable revolution has taken place in French industrial and commercial thought, and in this connection the growing desire for the more efficient exploitation of the colonies has been noted.

Perhaps the most important of all French questions is that of finance. I do not take an unduly pessimistic view of the difficulties which face the country. It should always be remembered that it is not easy to ascertain the precise figures: in many cases they do not exist, and in other cases the most contradictory estimates are made by various authorities, all of whom are entitled to a hearing. By far the most important recent work on the twin subjects of French Economics and Finance for English-speaking readers is the Report of Mr. J. R. Cahill, the Commercial Counsellor to the British Embassy in Paris. To him I desire to express my indebtedness for the personal help he has freely given.

It is impossible for me to acknowledge, except in general terms, my indebtedness to a multitude of French friends, nor can I mention the scores of books and the hundreds of documents which I have consulted. Since the War there have been many publications on various aspects of France, but so far as I know nothing of a comprehensive character has been attempted. That is my justification in essaying to supply, however imperfectly, a want that must have been felt by all who are interested in France.

I can only trust that this portrait of a nation will be, in spite of its defects, of some permanent utility, and I beg the reader to make allowances for the difficulty of navigating seas which are often uncharted.

Several chapters are longer than the general scheme of this work would seem to warrant, but I am myself conscious chiefly of their inadequacy, and have practised the most severe compression. That there are errors is in the circumstances possible, though the greatest pains have been taken to avoid such errors.

The old dilemma presented itself: if I had been altogether objective this book would have been merely a dull compilation: if, on the other hand, I expressed personal opinions there would be many readers who would disagree with me. On the whole, in spite of the risks, it seemed to me desirable not to refrain from expressing my personal appreciations of French art, literature, politics and economics.

Another objection that it is possible to raise is that the time has not yet come to write of conditions which are in flux. France is undergoing a tremendous transformation. She will not keep still while her features are being limned. It may be that even before the publication, or soon after the publication, of this book events will have overtaken it. But to that objection it is easy to reply: are the conditions of any country sufficiently stable to be fixed in this manner? Only a civilization that is already dead can be described with any finality – and, indeed, even the remote past seems to change for every generation.

Let it be cheerfully acknowledged that France is alive; and if we are to wait until she enters the domain of history we shall have to wait a long time. Therefore, with all the risks and the difficulties that the task comports, I have judged it expedient to paint this picture which, in essentials, will, I believe, represent France as she is for many years.

If I have done anything to remove misconceptions which abound, or to furnish enlightenment for a certain number of readers, I shall have had my reward.

S. H.

PARIS
May 1925.

BOOK I

SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL

Chapter 1

IS THERE A NEW FRANCE?

Is there a New France? Certainly there have been many variations in French life since 1914: how could it be otherwise? The world upheaval brought about such social changes as the greater freedom of the young unmarried woman. There has been a partial abandonment of the insularity which distinguished the Frenchman shut within the walls of the national boundaries. Monetary values have altered not only in the sense that the franc has fallen but in the sense that the old virtue of thrift has been called into question, that there is increased luxury and display. The middle classes find their means more straitened, but they are nevertheless inclined to be less economical; while the *nouveaux riches* are often spendthrift and participate in the excessive frivolity of the cosmopolitan haunts of the capital which draws unto itself the pleasure-seeker, man and woman, of other nations. The men who fought in the trenches returned desperately discontent with the scandalous profiteering of many who had remained behind in the towns and in the countryside. There was a sense of injustice which for a time found expression in two ways: in the adoption of revolutionary doctrines and in a frenetic gaiety and a cynical heedlessness. But this was a passing phase. The sober, solid bourgeoisie, the backbone of France, has recovered itself and the period of unrest appears to have ended. The real France is more industrious than ever and the most notable development is that of a bigger, bolder capitalism with more extensive vision. In the course of this study we shall observe many minor revolutions of feeling, of thought, of conduct, of material circumstances; but essentially after all we shall discover that the French remain the same, unchanged and unchangeable. They are perhaps the most conservative nation in the world; their roots go down deep; they turn perpetually towards the past; they are proud of their ancient origin and culture; they have the most profound respect for tradition in all

domains; and although their history has been perpetually troubled, in spite of all vicissitudes the French spirit has undergone no drastic mutations and under the accidental differences there is a permanency of character which nothing seems to shatter. "Nous avons changé tout cela," cried the mock doctor of Molière who decided that in future the heart should be on the right side of the body; and this exclamation may be regarded as the standing joke of the French people. They do not believe in fundamental changes and they express this in their saying, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose."

The visitor to France in general and to Paris in particular is apt to judge the character of the people by exceptional aspects which naturally come under his observation. He is impressed perhaps by some noisy street demonstration or he may read in the newspapers of disorderly scenes in the Chamber and flamboyant political speeches. It is necessary to accept French political statements and manifestations only with a large discount. They do not mean all they seem to mean. As for the blare and glare of certain special quarters they have no more to do with the real France than have the manners of the British and American Embassies. I remember a remark made to me by a famous Military Governor of Paris that never since his student days had he visited Montmartre, which although the most foreign part of Paris is regarded by many people as typically French. Even the great hotels and restaurants and dancing-halls of the Grands Boulevards and the Champs-Elysées and the Place Vendôme are chiefly frequented by foreigners. The fashionable shops of the Rue de la Paix depend upon visitors. The lighter theatres and music-halls and cabarets – though in the cabarets a special language that the ordinary tourists cannot understand is spoken – attract foreigners and provincial Frenchmen intent on escaping from the monotony of everyday life. There is no country about which superficial views are more easily formed, but these superficial views are altogether erroneous. The traveller who

landed at Boulogne and seeing a red-haired woman wrote in his note-book that French women have red hair has a multitude of successors.

France has been criticized recently by two equally distinguished observers on totally different grounds. The first was impressed by the ugly greed, the subordination of everything to acquisitiveness, the determination to be drab and mean and miserable. The other found France gay, light-hearted, reckless, both in her public and her private finances – eating and drinking and making merry for to-morrow her bank-notes will be worth nothing. Both of them are wrong. The great mass of the French people is not wasteful. It is concerned with the saving of sous, but it has a capacity for occasional bouts of wholesome merriment as anyone who has seen the throngs dancing at every street-corner under the swaying coloured lanterns of Quatorze Juillet should realize. The danger of personifying a nation is increased in the case of a country like France which is so highly individualized. It is not even easy to put the French into social classes: one can divide them into peasants, workers, bourgeoisie and the old nobility, but one is merely begging the question; for the bourgeoisie – to take what is perhaps the largest class – may be divided up into a multitude of altogether distinct types.

*

Moreover, neither the Parisian nor the Breton, in so far as he is distinctive, can be regarded as the true Frenchman. Just as the physical aspect of each province of France is peculiar to itself, so the inhabitants are extraordinarily different from the inhabitants of other provinces. The resident of Auvergne is unlike the Norman: the men of the North are unlike the men of the South. Nobody could mistake a Marseilles citizen for an Alsatian. In recent years new impetus has been given to the regionalist movement, and an attempt has been made to develop local arts and crafts, to preserve local customs and costumes.

The dialects vary to a surprising degree, the modes of thought

vary no less strikingly. France is as composite a country as one could well conceive. There remain, almost unmixed, different bloods and breedings and cultural backgrounds, as there remain diversified climates and landscapes. There are strong religious and non-religious divisions; there are separate economic interests. The provinces persist although, for administrative purposes, abolished. It would seem that there is no unity, that each city stands aloof wrapped in the mantle of its particular traditions. Yet somehow there comes out of this conglomerate mass of many elements, the unmistakable Frenchman, and in some mysterious manner the French have attained to real homogeneity.

Nothing in recent history has been more surprising to American and British students of politics whose acquaintance with the French is not of long date, than the refusal of the outstanding figures to fall into the neatly prepared pigeon-holes of pre-conceived ideas. Few of them answer to the customary caricature. The Provençal composed of a *mélange* of races of the Mediterranean, may be dark-haired, small, lithe and lively; but the Norman is frequently tall, florid, fair-haired, cautious and cunning. The people of Brittany, of Celtic origin, do not resemble in the least the people of the great Central Plateau. The medley of races in France is indeed remarkable. In the melting-pot of Paris one will find the man of Iberian extraction, Gascon and Basque, and the man of the Nordic type. The Greeks were early settlers, as well as the Romans. Huns and Arabs have left their traces; Scottish and Irish stock has been transplanted. Some of the most famous Frenchmen were of Italian descent. To these influences could be added many more, and one may well ask whether the true French stock is Gallic or Roman, or Norman or German.

Yet, in spite of these variations between the men of Flanders and the Cévennes, of Burgundy and the Gironde and the rest; in spite of invasions and settlements; in spite of a geographical

situation which connects France with the Mediterranean and with the Atlantic; in spite of her Teutonic and her Latin affinities; in spite of all, France is one country, and the French are one nation.

*

It is sometimes suggested that the unifying force is Paris. Certainly the French with their love of systematization have turned to Paris for not only their laws and their administrative control, but for their ideas. The young provincial aspires to Paris. Often, indeed, in spite of admirable universities in the country, he has spent his student years at Paris. The exigencies of life take him away again to some post in his home town or in another part of France, but always does he remember Paris, and always is it his ambition to return. Paris is the magnet which attracts all Frenchmen: it draws unto it the Breton and the Burgundian, the Auvergnat and the Picard; they bring to the capital their own modes of thought and behaviour, but they quickly become true Parisians, absorbing the peculiar spirit of Paris, and through a thousand channels conveying that spirit to the distant places of France.

In spite of the fact that the young Frenchman from the North, the South, the East, and the West retains his native idiosyncrasies, he nevertheless quickly gains something from the great city. One sometimes wonders if there are any Parisians born in Paris. For myself, I have found that practically all my acquaintances, who are in many strata of Paris society, come from the provinces and retain their connection with the provinces. Their special characteristics, their accent even, they do not lose, but they add something to them which makes them unmistakable Parisians.

The attempts at decentralization, though real, will never succeed in destroying this influence of Paris, which reaches to the remotest corners of the land. Every Frenchman has, as it were, two homes – that in which he was cradled, the love for which

he never loses; and Paris, that magic, magnetic, magnificent city to which he is drawn. Even if his work lies elsewhere he takes every opportunity of visiting the immense town of the Ile de France. Thus there is a constant coming and going: there is a great web, every strand of which leads to Paris. It is not a mere interchange of influences – the influence of Paris composed of many elements becomes something distinctive which dominates all the rest: Marseilles and Lyons, Bordeaux and Lille, Strasbourg and Nice, may each have its own flavour, may each develop in its own way; but set above them all stands Paris unifying, centralizing, fashioning the French spirit.

It has been repeated many times that the foreigner who knows only Paris does not know France, and this not very profound remark is obviously true. France stretches from frontier to frontier, from the sea to the mountains, with variation after variation, and it would be absurd to pretend that one particular spot represents in the fullest sense the whole. But the commonplace has been mouthed far too often, and one is bound to retort that Paris does sum up the rest of France far more effectively and truthfully than does any other capital of any other country. For Paris is composed of men and women from every village of the French territory: from Paris radiate all kinds of social, political and intellectual influences, and if Paris takes something from the provinces, it gives back much more. It is Paris which governs France, and the local official depends directly upon Paris.

Apart from the mere physical fact that Paris is not France, it will surely be realized by anybody who is acquainted with the unique position that Paris occupies, that it is to Paris that everything trends, it is from Paris that everything goes. The glamour of Paris for the Frenchman – as indeed for the foreigner – is undisputable. It is Paris which moulds and makes the tastes, the feelings, and the thoughts of France as neither New York

nor London make and mould the thoughts, the feelings, the tastes of America or of England.

*

Whatever other causes there may be, it is certain that in all the diversity there is a unity: the French spirit is a reality; the Frenchman, whether he resembles in some respects the Spaniard or the Englishman, the Italian or the German, the Scandinavian or the Asiatic – whatever may be his origins – is beyond doubt the Frenchman and resembles in essentials every other Frenchman. Indeed, it may be questioned whether it is possible for the foreigner to live among the French for long – assuming that he genuinely lives among them and does not merely mingle with the colony of his compatriots – without himself becoming French. One marvels at the swiftness with which the United States assimilates immigrants. In less than a generation the immigrant family becomes Americanized and would be astonished were its nationality to be questioned. But in France the process is at least equally rapid, and a child brought up in France among the French is as French as the most extreme Nationalist could desire.

It is amazing to go over the names of distinguished Frenchmen whose origins are not French. There are the MacMahons, the Gambettas, the Mirabeaus, the Gallienis, and one is even tempted to include the Napoleons. What, after all, is nationality ? It seems to have little to do with race, it can be compounded of many apparently antagonistic elements. Surely it is rather the result of environment, of habit, of training, than of blood. France at any rate has a curious faculty of absorption. The Poles and the Russians who now abound in France are literally acquiring the French nationality – for in the case of some countries at least, nationality is no less real because it is acquired.

From time to time a wave of xenophobia seems to sweep over France. The foreigner is looked at askance, he is regarded as

an interloper; various proposals are made to regulate him, to tax him and to subject him to inconveniences. But one suspects that the object is merely political; the feeling against the foreigner certainly does not go deep. There is no country in Europe which is more hospitable. Certain parts of France – such as the Riviera – are almost given over to the foreign visitor, and even on the Normandy coast the purchase of property by Englishmen has been of recent years considerable. One can safely disregard occasional exhibitions of pettish resentment, for France, with her low birth-rate, is obliged to encourage, and even to arrange for the inflow of foreign workers, and with her financial situation, finds it to her interest to receive tourists in the largest possible numbers. Nor does she do this grudgingly and under constraint: in a long experience of France, even at those moments when the feeling against the foreigner had been stirred up by comprehensible political campaigns, I have never seen nor heard of the smallest hostile incident. Prejudice against the foreigner is much more in evidence in England than in France. The English living in their island home are still inclined to be amused and somewhat contemptuous of the foreigner, but the French – who renew their population by welcoming the foreigner, and who are tolerant and scarcely surprised at anything unusual in appearance or manner – behave most generously towards their guests. Nor do they mind the success of the alien: when once he is absorbed he can play almost any part in social, in business or in political life without anyone dreaming of referring to his origins. Thus, during the Third Republic, we have seen men whose names denoted their ancestry, which was not French, serving as Prime Minister and as President of the Republic.

*

What is this something with which French culture seems to stamp all old residents of France as well as French citizens? If one were obliged to express it in a single phrase, one would

say that it is a laughing philosophy of accepting life as it is. The French are realists – not of the grim, dour kind, but realists in that they make the best of circumstances and do not seek to hide the truth from themselves. They are intellectually honest and temperamentally happy.

One writer on France with whom I disagree entirely, has insisted that the French are disloyal in their intellectual outlook. They are, he says, the victims of convention. In the schools their individuality is not encouraged but repressed. The boy is taught precisely on what lines he should reason; he must accept his philosophy ready-made; everything is determined by tradition. But this is surely a criticism that cannot be applied particularly to the French. Liberty of thought, the plain expression of fearless truth, is hardly encouraged by the educational system of any country. The real point is that the Frenchman is so mentally alert, so accustomed in lively conversation to discuss subjects which in Anglo-Saxon countries are scarcely discussed at all, that he does arrive at his own conclusions. The very methods of logic that he is taught help him in the end to think for himself. He is able to see the flaws in reasoning, to apply the methods of criticism that he has been taught, and to perceive clearly the vital points. He certainly is not afraid to acknowledge the arguments which bear against his thesis. There is a directness and a force in his mental processes which are not incompatible with subtlety and suppleness.

It may be confessed, however, that it is difficult for the Frenchman to disembarrass himself of many of the conventional admirations that are imposed upon him, and that is especially true of values in literature and art. One is rarely quite sure of the genuine ardour of a Frenchman for the Classics. He accepts them and he professes to admire them, and these appreciations, which may or may not be well founded, are in his eyes sacrosanct. But the younger Frenchmen are breaking away even from these sham admirations, and in other matters which have

for them a more lively reality, they are undoubtedly less afraid to be heterodox than is the ordinary Anglo-Saxon. In religion, in politics, in most of the great problems of life with which the Frenchman is concerned, he is frank and repeats no lesson that has been learned. The principles that he has are peculiarly his own: he is not a mystic, he is a Cartesian, and Descartes remains the representative French philosopher.

Perhaps his faith in ideas, his passion for reasoning, is exaggerated, but he keeps his feet on solid ground and rarely walks with his head among the unsubstantial clouds. In practical life he is eminently sensible; he does not gloomily put questions which cannot be answered; he believes in enjoying himself as much as he may, but always in moderation, and while looking after his personal interests with prudence, to fulfil his social and especially his family duties. He does not indulge in illusions: in matters of love, for example, in spite of erroneous deductions which have been drawn from the prevalence of the *crime passionnel* he is *terre à terre*. He has deep-rooted sentiments which can be reached, but speaking generally, apart from moments of excitement, he is cautious, demanding from life no more than life can give; preferring to proceed placidly, to keep his ambitions within bounds, to take a middle course and not to sacrifice in the pursuit of some ideal the pleasures which are at hand. He possesses far more than the Anglo-Saxon the art of *savoir-vivre*.

Chapter 2

THE PERILS OF THRIFT

THE Frenchman loves to play with words, to work out his opinions in public, to analyse, to generalize, to lay down axioms. Always does he believe that everything can be reduced to a system, but he does not shrink from any consideration which demolishes or appears to demolish his system. Patiently will he build it up again. For all his love of synthesis he is open-minded.

At the dinner-table, in the cafés, wherever two or three Frenchmen are gathered together, you shall hear talk such as you would not hear in the more reserved, and less voluble, Anglo-Saxon countries. No subject is really out of place ; one can discuss problems that would hardly be broached elsewhere, and one can hardly choose one's companions badly, for rich and poor, humble and mighty, they are prepared to expound their views on any topic however vast, however intimate.

Sitting on the terrace of a café on the crowded boulevards, I have often heard excellent talk about poetry, about prose, about religion, about diplomacy, about the deep things of the soul. The Frenchman is not ashamed to be intelligent and to display his knowledge as are too many Anglo-Saxons. One French lady of my acquaintance used to declare that the men in English drawing-rooms could not be induced to talk of anything but horses and dogs, and perhaps, in a casual way, the latest play. Admit that this is an exaggeration, that the English people are not so tongue-tied, so lacking in general ideas as is pretended, it is nevertheless true that they are not easily drawn out by strangers. Whereas in France a good crack is what the Frenchman most seeks, and he will be grateful if he is given the opportunity even by a stranger of speaking his mind at large.

On the other hand, this expansiveness, this wish to entertain himself, while entertaining a listener, this attempt to be at once witty and wise, is accompanied by a real reserve which is

difficult to define. The Frenchman may tell you, with surprising lack of embarrassment, almost as a matter of course, about his family affairs, his relations with his wife, for example; he will chatter freely enough in all conscience, and will say things that an Englishman, even in his most confidential moments, would hardly dream of saying to his closest friend. And yet, there will be a reticence which the Englishman does sometimes abandon. You feel that the talk is impersonal, is, in a sense, abstract, and is not meant to admit you into the inner circle of the talker. There is seldom that sympathy, often inarticulate but deep, which may exist between men of the Anglo-Saxon culture. Even the references to domestic matters are only intended to illustrate some point, and are made with the same detachment as would mark a reference to an incident recorded by the newspapers. The Frenchman talks to please first himself, and then his interlocutor. It is all part of the game of existence which he thoroughly enjoys and never arrests with morbid interrogatories.

The art of conversation is, in short, the art of social life. It is true that the Frenchman is *spirituel*: he is naturally quick and bright and clever, and he cultivates his gifts. The wit may not be particularly fine wit: it is generally rather sprightliness, a jumping from idea to idea, sheer animal spirits, *gaîté de cœur*, the sheer *joie de vivre* which bubbles and sparkles; but it is good and amusing. The Frenchman refuses to be crushed by the cares of life – that life which, as he says, is too *quotidienne*.

What must strike the observer, too, is the absence of snobbery. This does not mean that pomp is despised, that place and power are not valued, that there is no hierarchy; on the contrary, hierarchies exist to a much greater extent than in either America or England, and one must be very careful to observe the proper etiquette. A man's situation must be respected, his title – which incidentally one will find on his visiting card – must be given to him on any ceremonious occasion. But that

is merely one form that the scrupulous politeness of the French people takes ; it does not suggest any gulf between superior and subordinate. The classes mingle freely: there is little haughtiness on one side or obsequiousness on the other. There is a consciousness of equality: a working man and a member of the upper bourgeoisie, if they are thrown together, will converse without a hint of social difference. The equality and fraternity and liberty since the Revolution inscribed upon the buildings in France, are, so far as casual social intercourse is concerned, realities. There is neither condescension nor sycophancy.

*

The French on the whole are a temperate people. I have seen little drunkenness at any time, and since the use of absinthe was prohibited, none at all. Undoubtedly the use of that seductive green drink wrought much havoc, and it was wise of the authorities during the War to abolish it altogether by decree. Not that substitutes – which have been given fancy names, but which resemble and taste like absinthe and are almost as harmful – have not been introduced into the cafés. It is too much to expect the French to obey the laws if they do not happen to approve of the laws. They will always find some means of turning them if they do not ignore them altogether. Still, the French in their drinking habits, as in most things, are moderate ; their moderation is indeed immoderate. Wine is the national drink, and, white or red, is drunk in fairly large quantities by almost everybody at lunch and at dinner. Several aperitives and a liqueur after each meal are generally taken, and a Frenchman of a fairly typical kind may drink beer in the café until bed-time. There is never any question of drunkenness, and the drinking of good light French wine is comparatively harmless; it exhilarates and does not brutalize. The proportion of teetotallers in France is remarkably low. Most Frenchmen make no secret of their enjoyment of the table,

and cultivate the art of eating and drinking: this is part of their easy-going philosophy. At the Salon d'Automne the cuisine is ranked with painting and sculpture. It should be said that the gourmet demands the most elaborate refinement; he is seldom a glutton; it is not his purpose to over-eat but simply to eat well. In any case the French are more luxurious in their food than are the Anglo-Saxons, and their inclination to self-indulgence in this respect has for counterpart satisfaction with more inadequate housing accommodation than would otherwise content them.

A moralist some years ago wrote that, in his opinion, the love of good living in the middle and upper classes amounts to a serious defect, and actually operates as a restraint on population, since it would be as cheap to feed a large family in a plain way, as to feed a small one on luxuries. He further declared that luxury in food and dress are, in his opinion, two great parents of evil in France. This is surely grossly to overstate the case. The French have the knack of making the most of the smallest fragments of food which by culinary skill they work into dainty dishes. Moreover it should be remembered that the French eat twice a day only; they work hard for long hours, but they know how to take their ease, to obtain genuine enjoyment from the amenities of life, to relax smilingly.

*

The suggestion that the French are in any way wasteful is the more surprising because they have been always regarded, and rightly regarded, as the thriftiest of people, and have even been accused of carrying thrift to the point where it becomes avarice. Few Frenchmen live up to their incomes: they manage to put something by for a rainy day, or better still, found or add to a little family fortune. I have seen many striking examples of this capacity for household management. I have one case particularly in mind of a poorly-paid Government official in the provinces – he has never earned more than three or

four hundred francs a month – in these days less than $6 or 26*s*. a week – but has somehow contrived to bring up a family of three, to send the two boys and the girl to college, where they are preparing themselves for the liberal professions.

The immense amount of self-sacrifice that this implies is almost incredible, and yet I have personally seen that the father of the family somehow contrives to obtain his little pleasures. Even the poorest family which is rightly directed by a capable housewife, as are most of the French women, surrounds itself with little innocent and inexpensive graces and keeps a higher level of smiling order than I have found in any other country. There is the most careful planning to make ends meet, but it is not an anxious planning. The science of extracting the most from every sou, of making some use of everything, has been carried to a degree that to me seems altogether admirable. If it is necessary to live on rice and potatoes and beans, it will be done in the daintiest possible manner; there will be no air of misery. Poverty will appear to be the relative thing it is. The herring which constitutes the *pièce de résistance* of the principal repast will be prepared and served with skill, and if the appetite is not altogether satisfied, at least the eye will be pleased. There will be nothing gloomy and savage about the meal; there will be a babble of cheerful conversation. I do not pretend, of course, that nowhere can one find the utter degradation of extreme poverty – there is a horrifying suburb of Paris where the rag-pickers live in dismal distress – but speaking generally, there is a neatness, a sense of competency and sufficiency, an atmosphere of contentment with things as they are, which does not exclude the desire to make them better for the next generation, in all French families whose situation has not become absolutely impossible. It does not become impossible until long after the point of despair would have been reached in the English-speaking lands.

Throughout all grades of society this cheerful attempt to make

the best of everything runs. The smallness of the wages paid in many callings is staggering, and one wonders how such an appearance of respectability, independence, and adequate means can be kept up. It was recently revealed publicly by the agitation of the Civil Servants who number nearly 700,000, that they are ill paid and have no hope of ever being well paid. It was agreed by the Government to raise their salaries all round, and the salaries when raised ranged from six thousand francs a year to forty thousand francs. One has only to turn these amounts into American or English money to realize how low is the standard as compared with ours. Most of the salaries, of course, approximate rather to the minimum than to the maximum, and the maximum, be it remembered, is given to the chiefs of departments and the highest functionaries of all kinds. A judge, a finance official who controls large sums, a minister, a man who helps to direct the life of the nation, is often paid less than a clerk in an ordinary London business establishment. A professor whose name may be known all over the world may receive less for his services each month than a New York bricklayer for a few days' work. In industry and in financial enterprises big money can be obtained, but even then it is on a much smaller scale than that to which we are accustomed. In short, money is made to go much further in France than elsewhere. This was always the case. Before the War living was cheap, and salaries were insignificant. Since the War living is dearer, and although salaries have increased, they are on the whole smaller in proportion to needs than they used to be. This applies to all classes, from the day labourer to the most highly placed official. A journalist with a great reputation, whose articles may often be quoted abroad, will work for the most meagre fee, and I have heard of advocates at the top of their profession whose earnings of perhaps a hundred thousand francs a year are considered to be extraordinarily large.

But the point is that, while the greater part of the people gain

sums which would be scoffed at by those occupying corresponding positions in other countries, they nevertheless seem to be well-to-do, their houses are models of taste, there are always interesting pictures on the walls, and *objets d'art* which give a rich appearance. The men are scrupulous in their dress, and the women are easily the best-dressed women in the world. They will give little dinner parties where everything is perfectly done. There is no sign whatever of discomfort nor is there discomfort.

This is explained by the long habits of thrift practised from generation to generation, and by the fact that every family as it is constituted starts with some capital, little or big, which enables it to establish itself. It has not to struggle to set itself up: it is set up by its elders: and with a fair beginning and the exercise of economy which is an hereditary instinct, it can make a good show, live strictly within its means, and have the consciousness of always being a little richer at the end of the year than at the beginning.

*

The French avoid debt like the plague, and they are not ashamed of a modest social position. There is no jealousy of the neighbour, there is no foolish emulation. Further, the absence of snobbery is such that a man of talent or of agreeable manners is accepted anywhere without regard to the kind of house in which he lives and the amount of money he is prepared to spend. If one lives in a small way one is not afraid to accept an invitation from those who live in a much bigger way – and one is not ashamed to return the invitation. Certainly the practice of thrift has its disagreeable side. There is often an excessive and unnecessary attention to tiny matters that are not worth while. The French sometimes miss the real economy of life: they will, for example, fatigue themselves and waste valuable time which could otherwise be well employed in struggling for a place on the overcrowded Underground trains, or on the slow moving buses, when they could well afford to take a cheap taxi and save

their time and energy. They will go to any trouble to procure an invitation to the theatre, or one of those "billets" which give the right to enter at a reduced price. Their vision in its very prudence is often narrow. They have no large conceptions. Since the War there has been some slight improvement, and in business, as we shall see, the French are beginning to realize that it is foolish to pay so much attention to the sous and neglect the larger possibilities which are opening out to them. They have shrunk from anything that was not perfectly safe: they have confined themselves to well-worn ruts, but they are now opening their eyes to the bolder requirements of the modern world.

It will, however, be a long time before the aim of the French tradesman, for example, will not be to save enough to retire upon in the shortest possible space of time, and to take no risks in doing so. He is not afraid of living unstylishly: he is ready to leave the city and inhabit a little cottage in the country, cultivating his garden, free from the cares of mere want. The Englishman or the American seldom likes, as the phrase goes, to come down in life, to live on less than he has been accustomed to live upon. He feels ashamed, he considers the opinion of his neighbour who would dub him a failure if he withdrew with a few hundreds a year. But there is no such terrible judgment of the neighbour in France. There are more *rentiers* – people living on a small income without giving anything in return – than anywhere else. The proportion, in spite of the shrewd blows that have been struck at the *rentier* through the depreciation of the franc, is constantly increasing. The Frenchman works hard in the hope of being able to stop working. That may or may not be good policy from the point of view of the individual: it depends upon his conception of life. But it seems to me to be bad from the point of view of progress: it means a lack of enterprise, and it means a multiplication of the drones in the human hive.

The *rentier* raises for France the gravest of all problems. Formerly it was the custom to keep gold pieces in the proverbial

long woollen stocking. With the disappearance of gold during the War, and the constant raising of loans since the War, this practice has been superseded by that of investments in Government Bonds. Doubtless the State needed the money, and doubtless from a variety of circumstances which can be discussed later, it was impossible, as in the case of England, to finance the war by taxation. But if people will not tax themselves they must pay in some other way: they have paid in France by the depreciation of their capital and the reduction of the purchasing power of the franc. But the State too suffers: much more than half its revenue must be devoted to the service of the debt. The *rentier* in France has become a parasite who threatens to suck the life-blood of the nation. He is in a privileged class: he is not called upon to pay income tax on many of his holdings; he takes without giving.

The *rentier* is to be found everywhere, though more frequently among the middle classes, of course, than among the rich classes engaged in big business who are gradually learning how to expand their enterprises. He provides no money for the development of industry; he does not give his share of labour to the community; he simply waits, an idle man, for the half-yearly payments to him which constitute a drain upon the State. The State in the end finds itself imposing taxes upon the rest of the community chiefly for the satisfaction of the *rentier*. In my own quarter in Paris no fewer than three tradesmen of the smaller kind have retired since the War. Only one of them was older than forty-five. They had made sufficient investments in Government stock to enable them to potter about in little gardens and play jacquet in the local café. If this were to be carried to even greater lengths than it has yet been carried in France – and as, unless there is a crash, it is likely to be carried – the number of workers and tax-payers will decrease until they are unable to support the burden of the State and of the *rentiers* besides. Not all of them actually retire; they are obliged to continue to work,

and their *rente* is simply an addition to their income from their labour. This tends to keep down wages, and partly explains the low salaries which prevail.

Once, when I was discussing this matter with M. André Tardieu, he recalled that long before the present peril arose M. Waldeck-Rousseau – the great statesman who held office for a longer period than any other Prime Minister of the Third Republic, and with whom M. Tardieu was closely associated – had issued a warning against the over-encouragement of thrift. It may be that, however much thriftlessness is to be deplored, we have here put our finger on what may prove to be a defect in the French character, at any rate in so far as it affects the social system. Some of the copybook maxims require revision. The old-fashioned virtues, though we may admire them, may not always be altogether good. It should be added that the habit of thrift is ultimately to some extent responsible for the low birth-rate in France – though there are many other causes – for it is partly on grounds of economy that there is a growing reluctance to bear children.

Chapter 3

MASQUERADES AND MILITARISM

One change which the War has brought, according to many people, is the development of physical training in France. This is of course nonsense if it means that before the War there was comparatively little sport practised in France. If it means that peculiarly English and American games have been introduced, the statement is true, but to suggest that the French are not an athletic people is to make a most grotesque blunder. In the first place, the army drill which every young Frenchman must undergo is an extremely formal kind of gymnastics. Even in the schools, where the body was neglected for some years and the brain overworked, there has long been a tendency to increase physical exercise. The ideas that still prevail about France are those which might well have passed muster before 1870, but since that date there has been a complete reaction. I still think the school curriculum in France is overcharged – but that is another matter: certainly it did not need the War and the example of the British to encourage physical education. In point of fact, one would say that the French are ahead of the British in gymnastics, for the British conception of exercise is unscientific. Sport for them is play. Even with the decay of duelling, which made a knowledge of swordsmanship essential, the practice of fencing has been kept up, and probably French fencing is the best in the world. Fencing is at least as strenuous a pastime as any English pastime. When one sees the enormous crowds which interest themselves in England and America in football and baseball, one thinks immediately of the still larger crowds in France which go to witness the great cycle races. One may regard cycling, in spite of the coming of the motor-car, as the great French sport. The exploits of the famous "aces" are known to every schoolboy and to every worker. It is quite possible to see congregated together for the finish of a cycling tour of France which excites the greatest possible popular enthusiasm,

hundreds of thousands of people. There are many other sports which make a strong appeal, but this is the French sport *par excellence* and seems likely to be for a long time to come.

There is a certain amount of boating, and France led England in swimming. Dancing is another sport as well as a pastime in France, and competitions are always being organized. Everybody dances: every little village has some place reserved for balls, every street corner on certain days – particularly those round about the Fourteenth of July, the National Fête Day – is the scene of a public ball, and practically the whole of the inhabitants of Paris and other towns dance to the strains of the bands provided by the public authorities under the multi-coloured lanterns stretching from tree to tree. There are many more sportsmen who go out with guns to shoot game in France than in England. The number of gun licences issued each year is almost incredible. Game may not be particularly plentiful, but it furnishes the pretext for long walks. Fishermen, too, abound as in no other country that I know, and if the actual occupation of fishing is placid enough, it usually implies a long tramp or a certain amount of boating before the favourite waters are reached. In any case there is healthy exercise in the open air, and the love of the open air is particularly marked in France. Sometimes I have been tempted to describe Paris as an out-of-doors city, and France generally as an out-of-doors country. In all weathers the French insist on sitting on the terraces of cafés; they stroll in dense masses along the boulevards. The Bois de Boulogne and the countryside within easy distance are crowded on Sundays and on holidays with huge throngs. Horse-racing, which is continuous except for a few winter months, is nowhere more popular than in France, and with the Pari Mutuel system those who wish to bet are more or less obliged to go to the course. It is true that there is some surreptitious and illegal betting in the cafés, but nothing like as much, I should imagine, as in England, where the working classes who never see a race

gamble freely. On the whole, the life of the Frenchman is healthier than that of the Englishman, and it is absurd to suppose because the French do not take kindly to cricket or baseball that they are therefore lacking in sportsmanship. On the other hand, England has exported into France such games as football, which is now played all over the country, and the success of American boxers has given a great impetus to boxing in France. Particularly since the War have boxing and football caught on, but that is no reason for persisting in the belief that while England and America are game-loving countries France has only lately become so. In track and field sports France has held her own: Bouin, who was killed during the War, was one of the greatest runners of all time.

*

The Napoleonic tradition dies hard, and it is still commonly charged against France that she is militarist and imperialist. Although the French are in fact readily stirred by any hint of aggressiveness on the part of a foreign Power, although they are inclined to become wildly sentimental when such words as *gloire* and *la patrie* are pronounced, I fail altogether to find in a long experience any signs of such militarist madness, any signs of a desire to subjugate other nations. There is no literature in the world which is so full of anti-militarist propaganda as is French literature. The most biting satire, the most bitter denunciation of war and of rulers who make war, are to be found even in the French novels. One cannot escape mockery of militarism and of military men. Zola and Anatole France are not, as is sometimes thought, exceptional. One could draw up a formidable list of anti-militarist publications, both in the form of fiction and of philosophical writings – a much longer list than any other country could furnish. The most casual acquaintance with French books will persuade the reader of the truth of this assertion. Except in moments of exaltation the French are the supreme anti-militarists of the world. We are apt to mistake

nationalism for militarism. The two sentiments have not necessarily anything to do with each other. Since the War, in consequence of circumstances which forced France to adopt an attitude of which both England and America disapproved – though they would in all probability have adopted a still stronger attitude had they been placed in the same position – the foolish legend of French militarism and imperialism has been allowed to grow, and has been sedulously fostered for political purposes. Certainly France cannot remain unperturbed at the prospect of the military resurrection of Germany, and has been haunted by the fear of *revanche* and a new invasion. "Put yourself in her place" is a counsel which might well be given to those nations which make unfounded allegations against the French temperament. In our time, or perhaps a little before our time, the French became really enthusiastic about the war for the liberation of Italy. Towards the Crimean War, although they were forced to take part in it, the French were apathetic. I should like to quote on this subject that excellent observer who wrote of what he knew, Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton. "The French," he says, "had no enthusiasm whatever for the Crimean War, which they looked upon as an English enterprise; they had none for the Mexican; and there was only a little noisy surface excitement in favour of the War of 1870. Since then the nation has really had the control of its own affairs and has shown no war-like tendencies. The Tonkin enterprise was ministerial and ruined the minister who undertook it. The French people would not even support a vigorous Egyptian policy. Its only national courage is that which takes the form of waiting calmly for the German onslaught. France advances her African frontier but not her European, exactly imitating the English policy of expansion out of Europe." I should add, although this may not altogether please British susceptibilities, that the French were whole-heartedly opposed to the British War with the Boers, and it will be remembered

that at no price would the French fight the Turks when, after the Great War, the drums were again beaten. One may criticize the French severely for deserting the British at Chanak, for running away, as the British said, from the Turks, but one cannot consistently assert that this is a proof of French bellicosity. French bellicosity does not exist in any shape or form.

The French were not alone responsible for the making of the Treaty of Versailles, which may be held to be unfortunate in its provisions, and in so far as they helped to frame it, it was with the intention not of provoking fresh wars but of making fresh wars impossible. That they made, in common with other Powers, mistakes about the effect of this Treaty, is altogether beside the point. That they have kept a large army, just as England and America keep large navies, can only be urged as evidence of their desire to fight again by those who are ignorant or who are blinded by political passions. It is to prevent war that the French have acted as they have acted since 1919, and that even the occupation of the Ruhr and the various attempts to break the unity of Germany, without any question of annexation to France, were undertaken. I have had the privilege of some personal acquaintance with the private sentiments of such outstanding French soldiers as Marshal Foch and General Gouraud, and I affirm emphatically that no greater pacifists could anywhere be found. It was with trepidation that France entered the War in 1914; neither M. Poincaré, the President, nor M. Viviani, the Prime Minister, who were on the high seas when the fatal step was taken, would have deliberately dared to face the consequences of a new struggle with Germany with the recollection of the defeat and humiliation of 1870 in their minds and with no certainty of English or American aid. The odds against France were far too great. As for the French people, they were, as anybody who had any acquaintance with them at that time will concede, altogether pacific in their intentions. Much praise has been rightly bestowed on the tenacity and the

bravery of the French, but on several occasions during the War the so-called *défaitistes* nearly brought about a catastrophic surrender. Men like Clemenceau, when once the War began, were determined to see it through at any cost, and doubtless, though not seeking, they welcomed the opportunity, as they supposed, of shattering once and for all the German peril.

What should rather surprise us – that is if we believe in the militarism of France – is the rapidity with which, after the War, the Radical elements, which are almost naïvely anti-militarist, which indeed are tempted to take some demagogic advantage of the natural anti-militarism of the people, their dislike of being bothered by unpleasant facts, their light-hearted repugnance for the doleful prophets, regained the ascendancy. The moment the Parliament which was elected while the War days were still an immediate and painful memory, came to an end, it was replaced by men who joyfully decided on the evacuation of the Ruhr, and who believed that universal and eternal Peace had come to the earth by way of Geneva, and who made of France not the most reactionary country in the world as she had been held to be, but a liberal, confiding, politically idealistic country in a world of conservatism. France, with its dreams of peace, with its simple, almost childlike, faith in foreign countries, stood solitary, surrounded by Spain, where a military dictatorship was still in existence; by Italy, where the Fascistes were in power; by Germany, which was moving Rightwards; by England, where Conservatism was in the saddle; and looked across the Atlantic to America, where the Republicans had just triumphed and the Radicals had been routed. This was the same country which it had been the fashion to denounce as in the grip of the men of the Right. Here was one more example of the supreme folly of generalizations, of abuse of nations because for a moment their policy is not in accord with ours.

*

It is necessary to strike this political note here in order to lead

up to the truth about so-called French militarism. So far as it exists, it is little more than a child's love of a uniform, a penchant for dressing up. You will see them, these Frenchmen, on fête days – on Mi-Carême and Mardi Gras – promenading the boulevards in amazing costumes of silk and velvet taken from some old wardrobe. The habit of masquerade, of play-acting, of imagining themselves in some other character, of escaping from the actual present, is ingrained. It accounts for much in France – the processions with their queens of a day drawn through the streets seated high on gorgeous flower-bedecked thrones, kissing their hands to their crowds of cheering subjects; for the frequent students' jaunts; for the peculiar romantic make-believe of the theatre, with its grandiloquent actors; for the ceremonious display which accompanies funerals; for the conscious parade through the town of the little white-robed maidens who have attended their First Communion; for the solemn beauty of High Mass in the cathedrals; for the joy in the military reviews at Longchamp; for the Arcs de Triomphe; for the Unknown Warrior's Tomb with its perpetual flame renewed daily.

There is an altogether lovable liking for trappings, for lace and braid, for decorations of all kinds. The porter at the Bank has a uniform; the Prefect has a magnificent silver-embroidered uniform; the members of the Académie Française wear green uniforms with dangling swords. There are uniforms everywhere, and if not a uniform at least the little piece of red ribbon in the button-hole which denotes the Legion of Honour, or the purple ribbon which stands for the Palmes Académiques. All this is perfectly innocent, and indeed delightful. It is part of the French comedy of life, and they know themselves how to make fun of it while still taking pleasure in it. The French are *cocardier*, they are willing to sport the largest-sized *panache*. They have exactly the same thrill as the small boy in waving the tricolor flag.

It was this sentiment which created the glamour of Napoleon; it is this sentiment which brings into town on a Sunday afternoon the proud young men of Saint-Cyr, the military school, wearing in their caps white and red feathers. It is, however, as far removed as possible from the true warlike spirit. Doubtless there is in the professional and military class a number of men who are anxious to distinguish themselves, and doubtless in the professional political class there is a number of men who deliberately play upon the nationalist fears of the people. But in general the charge of militarism is not only false, it is the exact opposite of the truth, which is that France is thoroughly anti-militarist. The peasants are entirely peaceful, and the townsfolk are completely without annexationist dreams. The Grand Press is naturally chameleon, taking its colour from the Government which happens to be in power, but the fundamental anti-militarism of the people is amply demonstrated not only in a whole literature which many other countries would have suppressed, but in the daily and weekly publications which make a special appeal to anti-militarist sentiments, and at the same time reflect the anti-militarist sentiments of the people. The War has certainly not affected the true French spirit unless it has perhaps increased the dislike of war.

The charge that is sometimes preferred that the French are provincial and self-centred comes nearer the truth, but it cancels out the charge of bellicosity. They stick close to their own soil, they are insular in a much deeper sense than the British. They have been content with their own culture, their own plays, their own works of art, unaffected by what is going on in the wider world. They are not disposed to lift their eyes above their own frontiers; they wrap themselves up in their own civilization, believing it to be not only the best but the only civilization. Nor do they seek to make proselytes; remaining uninfluenced they desire to influence nobody else; and if we have lately seen a development of interest in the colonies, it is because those colo-

nies are regarded as an integral part of France, some of them sending their own members of Parliament to the Metropolitan country. One could wish that France were more accessible to ideas from abroad, but whatever one wishes, the truth is that France hugs her own borders round her like a garment. I think I detect in the post-war France some breaking down of the barriers, but it is as yet uncertain.

Chapter 4

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

THE foreigner, or at any rate the Anglo-Saxon, is inclined to be shocked at the French administration of justice. The French conceptions of law are altogether different from ours. It has become hackneyed to say that the Anglo-Saxons treat an accused person as innocent until he is proved guilty, while the Latin peoples assume the guilt of a prisoner and put upon him the onus of demonstrating his innocence. One must beware, however, of such epigrams, for the moment the finger of suspicion is pointed at anyone, whether in France or elsewhere, there is necessarily created a presumption of guilt. It is not so much in the mental attitudes that the difference lies; it is rather in the actual forms of trial.

With all the scrupulous fairness which is observed in Anglo-Saxon countries, the chances of escape from the network of the law are nothing like so great as they are in France. Though many reservations must be made, it is possible that, from the point of view of the criminal, the French system is to be preferred. The French take everything into consideration. They do not rigorously confine their attention to externals, and they are not content with merely palpable facts; they try to ascertain motives, they inquire into general character, they delve into psychology. They have regard to temperament and take up a more human standpoint. The results may be sometimes bad and sometimes good. The moment emotion is allowed to come in justice, in the English sense, may fly out. The British do not pretend to know what cannot truly be known. They examine the circumstances coldly with an impartiality that is much rarer in France. But this impartial survey, aloof and aloft, this refusal to take heed of imponderables, and this more mechanical judgment, may lead to condemnations which would be impossible in France.

This must not be taken as a criticism of British justice, which

is in many respects the best in the world, but before rejecting as altogether inferior the French view of justice, it should be remembered that the French do make an honest effort to penetrate below the surface and to pardon where pardon is possible. They endeavour to comprehend – and to forgive. It is not enough to know the hard facts: they may be of relatively small importance. In England, for example, murder is murder, and there can be no question of degree. In France murder may be found excusable. The *crime passionnel* is recognized as a reality, and acquittal – or the finding of extenuating circumstances – is almost certain in such cases. There is much to be said for both the British and the French practice. Often the British practice is harsh; often the French practice is excessively lenient. We must make allowances for the traditions and for the cast of mind in either country.

On the whole, rough working justice is meted out in both lands, though wrongs are perpetrated both by sticking too closely to the letter of the law and by making sacrifices to the spirit of the law. Still, it must be confessed that the French are not a judicial people, they are easily carried away by their feelings. It is all very well to talk of understanding, but it may be that the average jury is not capable of real understanding, and the moment a departure from strict rules is permitted, the wildest vagaries are possible. False sentiments are aroused in France, and the eloquent lawyer is usually theatrical. No dramatic effects are excluded from the French courts, and weeping juries will often return verdicts against the whole weight of evidence.

American and English newspaper readers are frequently amazed at what appear to be quite unjustifiable pronouncements. Trial by newspaper is common. For weeks, and sometimes months, the French newspapers will be filled with prejudiced statements, either for or against an accused person; so-called revelations which have no solid foundation are made;

the public is worked up to favourable or unfavourable opinions. This is largely due to the absence of the public appearance of the prisoner during the preliminary proceedings. He may be detained not merely for weeks but for many months, while the examining magistrate tries to unearth all the relevant and irrelevant facts in private. There is, therefore, no check upon the proceedings, no straightforward reporting of them, and the Press is obliged to rake up whatever particulars it may think interesting. The authorities may properly give out a summary of the results of the investigations, but there is also a leakage of documents and *ex parte* assertions which strike one as improper. Some kind of Habeas Corpus Act seems to be called for, and Frenchmen themselves have often realized this necessity, but hitherto have failed to pass any law safeguarding the liberty of suspected persons. Attempts are made to wring confessions from prisoners. There are confrontations of witnesses with the detained man or woman which may degenerate into wrangles in which the prisoner may let slip some damning observation of which the examining magistrate may avail himself. The "reconstitution" of crimes, in so far as it is now resorted to, is intended in the same way to produce admissions.

When the trial takes place the Judge becomes a sort of additional prosecuting attorney, and in questioning the prisoner does not maintain that calm and dignity and impartiality to which we are accustomed. Cross-examination of witnesses, which is an art brought to its highest point in England, is almost unknown. Even if a witness is shown to be swearing falsely, his evidence is not necessarily invalidated: the case does not collapse because of such flaws. Moreover, the witness may speak of matters that are not within his first-hand personal knowledge. He may make the most general remarks about the character of the accused. Anything that tells against the accused may be introduced, even though it rests on the flimsiest foundations. On the other hand, the prisoner is also allowed to create an

atmosphere. Everything depends upon the atmosphere and upon the final speeches, which may wander far from the proofs which have been submitted to the Court.

Of recent years the First Offenders Act, which was due to the efforts of Senator Bérenger, has been freely applied, on the whole with admirable results. A sentence is passed in the event of conviction, but it may be with or without *sursis* – that is to say, it may or may not be suspended. A first offender who has thus escaped imprisonment, but over whom a sentence hangs, rarely offends again. Further, from time to time Amnesty Bills are passed by Parliament, and those offenders who are included in their scope are released and their records wiped clean. Since the War a number of Bills of this kind have been passed. Indeed, it is to be remarked that scandals are quickly forgotten. Even politicians and diplomatists who have incurred some blame which would, in Anglo-Saxon countries, utterly break their careers, may return to their former activities after a decent interval and may effectively live down their convictions. It would be invidious to give instances, but examples must occur to every newspaper reader. Perhaps it is not a bad thing that a man may thus obtain a second chance.

Executions are still public. The guillotine is erected before the prison and as the dawn points the prisoner is led into the street and swiftly dispatched. It is true that the little crowd of morbid sightseers is kept at a respectable distance and cannot, in that grey hour, really see the sudden end; but nevertheless after witnessing, in the course of my duties, one of these exhibitions, it is impossible to refrain from expressing the wish that if capital punishment is not to be abolished altogether, it should at least take place behind enclosing walls.

There is a type of criminal of whom Aristide Bruant, in his realistic chansons, has sung, who appears positively to enjoy the opportunity of strutting his little hour upon the public stage and of dying in beauty, with the world at least symbolically

present as he makes his heroic exit. The *apache* exists in all countries, but he is nevertheless a special product of Paris. He is the creature of an unhappy environment – formed by poverty in exceptionally squalid quarters into a rebel against society. After the War crimes of violence were amazingly frequent and the problem of the *apache* became acute. Fortunately the energetic measures that were taken have reduced the numbers of the professional criminals who held life cheap, and although attacks upon the person are still common, there has been a return to the normal conditions of civilization even in the large towns.

To M. Deladier, the Colonial Minister under M. Herriot, we owe the abolition of the infamous penal settlements overseas which M. Albert Londres vividly described in his terrible book *Au Bagne*; while General Nollet, after an inquiry, has promised to abolish "Biribi," the frightful military penal colonies under the blazing African sun, equally described by M. Albert Londres in *Dante N'Avait Rien Vu.*

Chapter 5

FOSTERING FAMILY LIFE

THE cult of the family is the foundation of French life. It is customary in newspaper articles to write that the French have not even the word "home" or its precise equivalent in their language, and the deduction is that the French differ entirely from the Anglo-Saxon peoples in their disregard for family life. It is amazing how such absurdities can prevail. If the French differ from the Anglo-Saxons in one thing more than another it is in their far greater regard for the home. France is built upon the home: the whole system of society is constructed on the *foyer*. *Foyer* may or may not be as good a word as home – besides meaning hearth, it is also applied to the green room of the theatre – and *chez nous* for the British and the Americans may not contain such depths of significance and affection as the expressions to which they are accustomed, but it is laughable to judge of their associations in the French mind by their associations in ours. They mean at least as much as "home," and the hearth is really a family centre from which the Frenchman rarely drifts. The Englishman's home may be his castle, but it is a castle into which almost anybody can enter at almost any time. The French on their side declare that "charbonnier est maître chez lui." He is not only master in his own house, but he is not disposed to open the doors freely to anyone who is not of the family. This is true not only of a class but of every class. The working man, the bourgeois, and the nobility are not ready to admit into their intimacy those who are not connected by blood or by marriage with them. There exist, of course, political and literary *salons* – though they are less numerous than they used to be – and there are social receptions as in other countries, but these semi-public affairs scarcely take one into the privacy of the home. It is much more difficult to penetrate into that privacy, not only for the foreigner but for the Frenchman, than it would be in our own country. It would

be a shocking breach of manners to drop in, even on a friend, in France. The houses are, in short, firmly closed: they are regarded as the sacrosanct precincts of the family.

Once I was asked to help in the establishment of a French political *salon* which would be particularly open to the distinguished foreigner, but I quickly observed that, with the best will in the world on the part of the host and hostess, there was a certain coldness, and the assemblies resolved themselves into something like public meetings. There was always present a specially prominent public man who, after dinner, took as it were the centre of the stage and held forth to the company. Sometimes when a visitor from America or from England came to France, I would present him perhaps to the President of the Republic, perhaps to the Prime Minister, perhaps to half-a-dozen other notabilities. There was never any difficulty in making the arrangements, but to present him to a private family was an entirely different matter. I came to the conclusion that it is much easier for the duly-qualified person to be received by the Head of the State and by the Ministers in France than, let us say, in England, where an audience of the King would be obtained only with considerable trouble; but that, on the other hand, the foreigner in England or America would find the great houses welcoming him much more than the foreigner in France would find corresponding houses welcoming him. What is true of France is equally true of other Latin countries. It should be borne in mind that in a peculiar sense the French guard the sanctity of the home.

*

The flat system as it is known in Paris and the larger cities is not to be found, at any rate generally, in the smaller provincial towns. In the provinces the houses are often separate and small. The concierge – the guardian of the door – is peculiar to the French capital. He and his wife are given a tiny apartment at the entrance, and they survey the comings-in and goings-out

of the tenants, their visitors and the tradespeople. It is the concierge who receives and distributes the letters: it is the concierge who generally looks after the place. At nightfall the door is closed and it is necessary to ring a bell whereupon the concierge from his bed pulls a cord which opens the door. He is supposed to protect the inhabitants against burglars and in fact efficiently does so. Many complaints are made about him; he is represented as disagreeable and always in search of tips. Perhaps others have had a more unfortunate experience than I have had, but for my part I am bound to testify that the system seems to me thoroughly sound.

Since the War there has naturally been a housing crisis. It is felt all over the country, but it is worse at Paris than anywhere else – except in the ruined North. The shortage of accommodation is doubtless one of the causes of the decline of marriage – which is now happily showing, however, an upward tendency – and the reluctance of married couples to rear children. It is difficult to see how the problem can be solved for many years to come. During the War years there was practically no construction, and the building trade has not yet recovered. From 1890 to 1901 – to take the figures for Paris – there was an average of 9,600 new apartments every year. From 1901 to 1912, there was an average of 8,400. In 1913 there were 10,642 additional lodgments, and in 1914 no fewer than 11,958. But during the War years the figures are : in 1915 only 2,258; in 1916 only 2,290; in 1917 only 1,239; and in 1918 not more than 1,060 apartments were constructed. After the War it was necessary to concentrate on the repair of the devastated provinces, and apart from this reconstruction work, there has been little augmentation of the number of houses in the French towns. The War figures have scarcely been improved, and as Paris is continually growing, it is now almost impossible to find a vacant flat. Those who are compelled to absent themselves from Paris for a long period do not as in other days relinquish their

apartment. At the best they sublet it furnished often at a considerable profit. The law has perhaps unwisely favoured the tenant, who is allowed to remain, and can hardly be turned out for any reason. The lack of all coming and going adds to the congestion. The landlord is not permitted to increase the pre-War rents by more than 75 %, and the landlord is therefore badly hit in a country where the cost of living as expressed in francs has, in round figures, increased by more than 400%. Thus we have an almost complete cessation of private building initiative. One can reckon that the cost of construction is four times as great as before the war. It is no longer a good investment to place money in property.

Various schemes for stimulating private initiative have been considered, but it would seem that the best scheme of all would be to restore more liberty to the proprietor. It is always useless to keep down prices artificially, thus preventing an adequate return for capital; and what is needed is rather the greater encouragement of the builder and the house owner. On the other hand, the Paris Municipal Council, like the local authorities in other towns, has tried to overcome the crisis by voting credits for houses. In a few years we may expect to see several thousand lodgments created. Among other things, the old fortifications of Paris, which enclosed the city in an inelastic corset and prevented its growth outwards, have been demolished. Whatever sentimental regrets one may have at seeing the disappearance of these military constructions which hemmed in the capital, it must be acknowledged that they were altogether useless, and that much waste land may thus be built upon. Paris is destined to expand like other great cities of the world. Around it there sprang up, even before the War, a ring of suburbs which will now be joined continuously to Paris itself, and model cities with parks and public squares will be built. This means that it will also be necessary to increase the facilities of communication. Paris will no longer be self-contained, but will

sprawl over the countryside, and the suburbs will be as accessible as the city. One cannot witness this movement with indifference, but one must recognize that it was inevitable.

*

Have the difficulties thus briefly indicated had any effect upon the family life of France? In a purely physical sense doubtless the absence of proper accommodation has driven the Frenchman, and the Parisian above all, to the innumerable cafés and restaurants, but in the moral sense there is no sign that the family unity has been broken. The visitor sees the immense throngs which are always to be found in these public places, and he may well conclude that there is little home life. But in this he is mistaken. After all, the clientèle of the cafés – apart from those of the boulevards which are frequented by foreigners – is smaller than would at first appear. Relatively a low proportion of the citizens are habitués of the café. These habitués are to be found at lunch-time taking their aperitif or their liqueur; they are to be found before dinner and some of them may resort nightly to the café as to a club where they can meet their friends, have their games, and indulge in conversation. There is indeed little need of the club: the café suffices. The *midinette* and the clerk hurrying to business may stop at the café to take a morning roll and a cup of coffee which constitute the French breakfast. The café is used because it is convenient and simplifies the domestic arrangements, but it does not seriously interfere with true domestic life. The same may be said of the restaurants which abound. They are convenient for those who must lunch in town, and for the large floating population which lives in the amazingly numerous hotels; but the true centre of the ordinary Frenchman remains the *foyer*.

Nothing of serious importance can happen to any individual without a *conseil de famille*. There are grave consultations at which are present, not merely the particular branch of the family directly concerned, but the various branches which have

a semi-legal right of regard. It is a solemn affair, this family council – as solemn as a council of state. Its decisions duly drawn up are, in so far as they are within the law, binding. There is much which cannot be done without the consent of the family. Legislation has provided for the authority of the most infrangible institution in France; legislation, too, is based upon the family. The individual is free only in so far as he does not injure the family, and the rights of the family are carefully laid down. A will cannot be framed without reference to the rights of the husband or wife or children, who are entitled to a definitely specified share of the estate. There are all kinds of legal obstacles to marriage without the consent of the family.

To give to the family council its full force it must be presided over by the local *juge de paix*. There should be at least six members of the family, chosen in equal numbers from the father's and mother's side. The choice of these relations is minutely prescribed and must be scrupulously followed if the decisions are to prevail. The business of the family meeting may be to appoint a guardian, to authorize or oppose marriages, to audit accounts, to decide questions concerning the estate of a minor, and so forth. It is a useful institution in watching over an estate since it divides responsibility and prevents useless expense and waste. The *juge de paix* is temporarily placed in the position of *père de famille*, and he is held in great respect.

As for the French father himself, his authority and power are truly surprising to Anglo-Saxons. He is in supreme command, his children cannot even leave the house without his permission. The father may have his child arrested and sent to a house of detention if he has grave reasons for so acting; but apart from the legal rights of the father, the Roman tradition gives him an authority which is rarely disputed. There is an obedience to parents such as one would hardly find elsewhere, and not only obedience but real affection. There is no attempt to con-

ceal natural emotion in France, and although the foreigner is apt to consider such display of emotion as artificial, even if in fact there is sometimes a lack of sincerity, these demonstrations nevertheless tend to develop and keep alive the affections they express.

*

The War has certainly served to break down some of the restrictions which surrounded the French girl, though not to the extent that is sometimes supposed. The French girl of the ordinary bourgeois family is still kept in leading-strings except in so far as the new exigencies of life make the old attitude towards the *jeune fille* impossible. While English and American girls are allowed to go about freely and are not prohibited from having young men friends, the French girl of the respectable family is seldom permitted to stir far without a chaperon. When she is engaged it is not customary to allow the young people to go out alone. Courtship is a formal affair conducted under the rigorous eye of the family. During the War these conceptions were necessarily upset. The father and the brother were away from home, and it was necessary for the women and the girls to carry on as best they could. Moreover, many girls became nurses or entered munition factories, or in one way or another gave their services to the country. They entered offices where they have remained ever since; they engaged in various kinds of business; they entered professions; there is a whole class of *jeunes filles* which it is no exaggeration to say was scarcely known in France a few years ago. Further, the playing of games by girls is now looked upon in an entirely different light. The French girl has a long way to go before she catches up with the British sporting Miss with her low heels and long stride, but tennis and golf and other outdoor sports have been taken up with much greater freedom. There is a great deal of prejudice to be overcome and it would be wrong to draw sweeping deductions from the superficial evidence

which applies to a comparatively small proportion of French girls, but still one does detect unmistakable signs of a change. The French girl is beginning – whether for bad or good it is not necessary to discuss here – to escape from the prison of conventions in which she has always found herself.

Among my personal acquaintances may be counted the distinguished directrice of the best periodical devoted to foreign affairs published anywhere in the world. In the Law Courts one will find among the women advocates in black gowns, a number of unmarried girls. Not long ago all the women doctors in Paris came from Russia, but there are now plenty of French women doctors. At the École Centrale they are even learning to become engineers and manufacturers. At the École des Beaux Arts they take a prominent place. The École des Chartes has registered many successes of girl students, and some time ago there was a great outcry in the French newspapers because the girls at the Sorbonne were carrying off all the honours, leaving the men the second places. In the Public Offices – notably the Post Office – women are conspicuous. In short, there has been an opening of doors on all sides. The French *jeune fille* is not as sheltered as she used to be, but in spite of all these facts an overwhelming number of French families preserve the former attitude towards girls and are shocked at the modern ideas which are making headway.

*

What has helped this movement is the fact that the War took such a heavy toll of the young manhood of France. The natural desire of the French girl was to be married. That was regarded as the only career open to women – though it should be said at once that the French woman has always displayed a remarkable capacity in almost every department of human activity, a capacity however employed in the assistance of her husband. Marriage was the true emancipation. Conditions have changed. It is estimated that the women outnumber the men in France

by two million. Marriage for a large percentage of girls is out of the question. It is necessary that they should develop a greater independence and should seek careers of their own. In spite, therefore, of the dead weight of tradition which kept the French girl carefully screened until after her marriage and then gave her full liberty and expected her to be far more helpful, to have far more direct dealings with the world than the average American or English wife, in spite of the dead weight of this tradition, there has been a mild revolution in France of recent years.

Normally, nevertheless, marriage is the goal, and marriages are arranged in France in a manner which often seems to the foreigner to be commercial. Love marriages are the exception rather than the rule. Given the French conception of the family, there is much to be said for the system. It is more than likely that a young girl without experience of the world will, if left to her own devices, make an irreparable blunder. Marriage is regarded as a companionship and partnership rather than as an affair of passion, and as such must be put on a practical basis. I express no personal view, but it must be stated that the system works well in France. There is nothing really shocking about the "dot" which is required by the prospective husband: there is nothing mercenary in the transaction. The Frenchman does not marry for money; that is not the object of the "dot." It is intended to defray a portion of the household charges, and is certainly not designed to enable the husband to live in idleness. It is expected that the income, actual or anticipated, of the husband shall be very much larger than could possibly be obtained from the capital that the wife brings. Moreover, the marriage portion of the wife is generally protected. The money is not appropriated, it is given to the husband as a sacred trust. It may be used as the husband thinks fit for the advancement of the position of the household. It should be kept and increased for the children. There are of course in France, as in other

countries, bad as well as good husbands, but the French theory of the family is largely justified by experience. Every Frenchman endeavours to give his daughter the largest possible "dot," and so help to establish a new family. There are all kinds of restrictions placed upon the husband in the management of his money. He has duties, not only towards his wife but towards her parents. The children of the marriage are safeguarded by the law. Under the marriage contract a wasteful or inexperienced man can be prevented from ruining the property of the married partnership by the wife applying for a separation of goods. In everything the interests of the family are considered.

There are four principal systems of marriage which are not, however, obligatory. Under the "community" system, which is assumed to have been adopted if no special contract has been drawn up, the husband and wife hold their estate in common. This common estate is administered by the husband who can transfer it or mortgage it without the consent of his wife. But if the wife considers that the estate is in peril she can apply for a *séparation de biens*. Under the system of *séparation de biens* the wife may be left free to manage her own patrimony. Under the system of *exclusion de communauté*, while each party retains the fortune brought to the marriage, the husband has the right to its complete management. Under the *régime dotal* the dowry is regarded as inalienable. The husband may not squander his wife's fortune. But this system is looked upon with disfavour in France. The "patriarchal" view of the family would have it that the husband should be indubitably the chief. He must be trusted to keep in mind not merely his own interests but the interests of the family, and in point of fact in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he is fully worthy of that trust.

Chapter 6

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FRENCHWOMAN

THE efficiency of the French wife is proverbial. The reputation which she has obtained is thoroughly well deserved. She is never idle. Devoted to the home, she may yet help to run the business. She is characterized by great common sense. The same traits are to be seen in all classes, but perhaps it is in the lower classes that is best displayed the capacity for careful management and for indefatigable labour. If the Frenchman has some unpleasant business to negotiate he sends his wife, who will assuredly do it better than he could. She has a cooler head, a more skilful tongue, and a bolder bearing. It would be wrong to go so far as to say that in France the woman is the better man, but in many things she certainly excels and the man relies upon her. Among tradespeople it is frequently the woman who manages the shop assisted by the man. Indeed it commonly occurs that while the husband follows some routine occupation, the wife on her side sets up an establishment which requires initiative and intelligence. She is eminently practical; she does not suppose that when once she is married she may lead a useless, dependent life: on the contrary, it is only after her marriage that she develops the talents which most Frenchwomen possess, and she contributes her full share to the *ménage*. She is brisk and bright and busy – no creature of leisure and of luxury; she stands at least on the level of the husband in the actual direction of affairs, however inferior may be her legal status. That is perhaps why women have never troubled about their legal status: they realize that the part they play does not depend upon their position in the eyes of the law, but upon their position in the eyes of the husband.

There is, to all intents and purposes, no Feminist movement in France because the Frenchwoman is quite content with the situation she enjoys and which, with her special qualities, she

must continue to enjoy. It has been well remarked that there is a curious approximation of the sexes in France, and that in no other part of Europe are men and women so nearly alike. The Frenchman may appear to the Anglo-Saxon races to be slightly effeminate, and the Frenchwoman may appear to be somewhat masculine in her activities. A quarter of a century ago a Women's Suffrage campaign was begun by a few persons like Severine, the dramatist Brieux, the novelist Marcel Prevost, but nobody paid much attention to it. Doubtless the vote will be quietly granted some day, but it will not be on account of any noisy propaganda. The Chamber did pass a Bill which would have given women the vote soon after the War, but it was rejected by the Senate.

This was in the first enthusiasm of the post-War period when the work of the women was being praised on every hand. They were splendid during the War: they ploughed the fields, they carried on the businesses of their husbands, they drove the tram-cars, they served as clerks in the offices, they made munitions, they acted as nurses – in short, without the unstinted help of the women who occupied all the posts of the men, the War could not have been pursued. They put up with hardships which it would be difficult to exaggerate. But they did not, and do not, ask for the vote as their reward, they are content to leave politics to men. They have some disdain for the futilities of the Chamber – and it may be added that the tendency in France, even among the men, is to despise Parliamentary institutions and to consider the Parliamentarians as self-seeking, incompetent, and even corrupt. There are no popular rallies, no large meetings in support of Votes for Women. The women themselves in the mass are perfectly indifferent, and leave the agitation such as it is to a few Society leaders, women lawyers, and others whose private hobby it seems to be. The cause is advanced chiefly by little conversations in drawing-rooms and by occasional articles in this or that newspaper. The latest

figures which I have seen indicate that there are in the whole country only about 12,000 Frenchwomen who are members of active organizations – and it may be suspected that most of them are engaged in this work because they happen to have little else to do. There is no antagonism of the sexes, as it has been called in other countries; men and women regard themselves as partners, not as rivals, and they are happy to leave to each other their special privileges and functions.

The woman believes that she exercises the greatest possible influence and authority in the present conditions, as indeed she does. Since, however, through causes already indicated she has been thrown in greater numbers into the ordinary labour market, there is to be observed a growth of the trade union movement among working women with the object of obtaining more equitable salaries, salaries which should be based upon their needs and their productiveness rather than upon their sex. In spite of the compulsion of circumstances which have forced women in France to work for their own hand, they are seen at their best in the matrimonial partnership. It is there that their spirit of self-sacrifice, their industry, their cleverness, their authority, are best manifested: they are working for the family, and although the family may not be large and the household may even be childless, the ideal of the *foyer* as something to be worked for and not merely regarded as a comfortable haven, is strong in all Frenchwomen.

It is sometimes represented that divorce is easy and common in France, but this is far from being the case. True, if both parties are agreed that they can no longer live together, they will have no difficulty in making the necessary legal arrangements, but if there is opposition on one side or the other, it will be a long and tedious business. The Frenchwoman, often regarding the man as a child, may show the utmost tolerance for his peccadilloes. She will close her eyes to obvious facts, will take a matter-of-fact view of them, will do anything to preserve the

home and to avoid the consequences of a rupture. This type of woman is depicted in her noblest aspect in an unforgettable scene in Balzac's *Cousine Bette*, where the Baron Hulot obtains the forgiveness of his wife. La Rochefoucauld declared that there were happy marriages but no delightful ones. But the woman in France makes the best of marriage.

I can well understand the common opinion about the Frenchman as being particularly susceptible to feminine charms, but the notion that the Frenchwoman is generally faithless is a stupid fiction. She keeps her head at all times and is always, in affairs of the heart, master of the man. The Frenchman readily becomes the slave of his fancies – the Frenchwoman never. It is of course foolish to judge of the Frenchwoman by the frivolous, expensively dressed Parisienne. She is a reality, bright, charming, vivacious. She is to be met in the rue de la Paix, at the fashion-houses, at the jewellers, about the Place de la Concorde, at the stylish tea-rooms in the Champs Elysées, at dazzling balls, at glittering social functions. For her whole quarters of Paris display their tempting wares; for her a score of expensive trades exist; but always in the background one should remember the business woman, the untiring *ménagère*, the shrewd, capable, active Frenchwoman: prudent, frank, with an unconcealed knowledge of life, the manager of men and the builder of the home.

*

At the theatres with their salacious farces, the foreigner may well be surprised to find French families openly delighting in the crudest jokes. He may receive a painful impression of the morality of the people, but his impression would be altogether wrong. He has perhaps failed to draw the distinction that the French draw between actual life and these amusing representations of a life that is altogether alien to the majority of the members of the audience. The French people, after a hard day's work, after their engrossment in the hard practical affairs which

make up their existence, feel no impropriety in unbending and in amusing themselves with the unreal traffic of the stage. They would be amazed to be told that they are judged by their plays, and that the conduct of the characters in a comedy is taken to be a picture of their own conduct. One need only look at the faces of an ordinary theatre audience in France to be convinced of the error of such judgments. One will see women, who are unmistakably respectable wives and mothers, of all ages, feeling no shame in listening to lines which would not be tolerated in any English or American theatre. The discrepancy between their own way of living and the way of living that is shown on the boards is clear enough. The foreigner who is puzzled should try to understand that the relief and enjoyment that the Frenchman and Frenchwoman obtain from such plays are in themselves proofs of the strangeness, the outrageousness, the remoteness of the theatre from their own lives. They divide life into watertight compartments and they are left unaffected by the spectacles which they have witnessed, thanks to the riotous imagination of the playwright. Such is the French habit, as it was the habit of other countries, until Puritanism, which would make art and literature and the drama conform to the standards of ordinary life, prevailed in England and elsewhere. The French see no more harm in these plays, which are generally regarded as characteristically French, than they would see in the painting of a nude. Everything in these matters depends upon the point of view and the French in their recreations admit much that they would not dream of admitting into their ordinary behaviour. To be shocked could quite arguably be regarded as a sign of a depraved mind which confounds play-acting with reality.

*

It is impossible also to draw deductions about a people from the reading of their novels. It seems incredible that anybody should mistake the average novel for a faithful picture of society.

It is the business of the writer of stories to entertain, and even the would-be realists who give us slices of life, choose the exceptional for their theme. Newspapers as well as novelists are perpetually telling us, for example, of crime, but nobody suggests that murder is a usual phenomenon. If the French novelist is fond of writing of adultery, it is surely not because adultery is to be regarded as among the common negligible incidents but rather because it is sufficiently exceptional to interest his readers. It should be considered how the French novelist is, as compared with the British and American novelist, handicapped. The pre-marriage romance scarcely exists in France on account of the carefully regulated marriage arrangements. It would be banal to relate the story of the young girl, brought up in the well-to-do bourgeois family, kept out of the way of romance, the courtship of the accepted fiancé conducted under the eyes of the family. It is only after marriage that anything can happen to the ordinary *jeune fille*. As a rule she settles down tranquilly, accepting the conditions in which she finds herself; but it is obvious that it is in this period that the novelist can best place his imaginary adventures. It must not, therefore, be supposed that nine out of ten French wives take unto themselves an *amant* any more than it must be supposed that nine out of ten English and American girls live through an extraordinary romance, thrillingly menaced at every moment, but ending happily with the chimes of wedding bells. Neither Charles Garvice nor the equivalent French novelist is painting real scenes, and nothing could be less fair than to attempt to discover the Frenchwoman within yellow paper covers. There may be a pennyworth of character and a pound of invention.

Nor does the popularity of a certain kind of story in France denote the secret sentiments of the Frenchwoman. People in all countries read because they are dull and they seek excitement in the relation of happenings which they would not seek in the happenings themselves. The public which devours

accounts of murders in the Press is not for the most part composed of murderers or of potential murderers. Indeed in France it should be observed that no details concerning divorce cases may be published in the newspapers. In both the great Anglo-Saxon countries hosts of readers gloat over the reports of matrimonial troubles: in France these matters are regarded as private and the law steps in to prohibit reports. Again it should be remembered that the French novel has a large sale outside France. It is just as cosmopolitan in its appeal as are the music-halls, such as the Folies-Bergère and the Casino de Paris, which are frequented by the foreigner rather than by the Frenchman.

Nevertheless it must be confessed that, since the War, and perhaps as the result of the War, there has been an increasing licentiousness. Authors have vied with each other in the production of what can only be described as pornographic literature. From time to time there is talk of suppressing the sort of book that either frankly or under the thin disguise of a moral purpose, introduces us into the over-heated, over-perfumed atmosphere of the alcove. But nothing seems to happen: the little campaign flickers and dies down. It is felt to be too late to withdraw liberties that have been so freely exercised. There is an uneasy recollection of prosecutions of other days which certainly did not diminish the sales or the reputation or the influence of the prosecuted authors. The moment there is question of proceedings one recalls the trial of Gustave Flaubert for writing *Madame Bovary*, now accepted as a classic; the trial of Baudelaire because of some of the poems in *Les Fleurs du Mal*; and the imprisonment of Jean Richepin for the publication of *Chansons des Gueux*. These proceedings were regarded as mistaken and brought only ridicule on the authorities. Even when Victor Margueritte painted in *La Garçonne* the highly-coloured picture of the so-called modern girl going boldly into every haunt of vice, the plea of a moral purpose – which with the plea of the artistic purpose is held to excuse anything – was put forward. In conse-

quence of the protests the Chancellor of the Legion of Honour did summon up courage enough to deprive Victor Margueritte of his decoration; but this decision was ridiculed and the author enjoyed an exceedingly profitable martyrdom.

But is it not true, it will be asked, that there is a new kind of girl which Margueritte has faithfully depicted? The answer is that this particular kind of girl is by no means new and that if she is somewhat more numerous to-day she still represents only a feeble percentage of the population. In every country there is a development of independence and of unblushing cynicism. It was inevitable, first, because of the greater liberty and promiscuity necessitated by the War; and, second, because of the desire to react against the monotony, the dangers, the deprivations which had been so cheerfully endured for years. But taking the French through and through, having regard to the sober majority as well as to the minority which is to be found in the cosmopolitan pleasure places of Paris, of Deauville, of Nice, the War left surprisingly little trace on the morals of France. The legend that Frenchwomen are more immoral than the women of other countries lingers in spite of the experience of all who have really travelled. It is forty years since Matthew Arnold wrote that the French were vowed to the worship of the great goddess "Lubricity," and innumerable writers have repeated the condemnation with variations. It is certain that a few persons worship such a goddess, but it is grotesquely inaccurate to make a sweeping generalization. The worshippers of the goddess are chiefly to be found in lunatic asylums, and those who do not die quickly enough will soon find themselves in such institutions. Wild assertions, whether made by Matthew Arnold or any other writer, carry their own refutation.

*

All this must not be taken to mean that the French are a more moral people than other peoples. It may be admitted that in some respects they are what we should call less moral. A great

deal depends upon convention. There exist in France classes which cannot be given their place in the ordinary ranks of society. They live, as it were, in the margin. Men and women, they are irregular in their habits. They do not conform to the general law. Apart from the nocturnal pleasure-seekers who may indeed live a double life of respectability and of folly; apart from those fairly well-to-do men who can afford to keep mistresses while fulfilling admirably their family duties; there are certain strata of the working classes and of the artistic classes in which illegitimate unions are recognized. During the War the Government found it necessary to place these illegitimate spouses on precisely the same footing as their legally married sisters. Long-continued cohabitation was regarded as an entirely satisfactory claim to the Government allowances. Such households in the eyes of the law did not essentially differ from the legal household. There was, it will be acknowledged, no good reason why they should be for this purpose worse treated. They had established themselves in exactly the same way, the union was just as permanent, the partners were at least as faithful to each other as the more normally wedded pair. That the man should be taken away on service of the State without a proper contribution being made to the upkeep of the household would have been conspicuously unfair. Nevertheless the State by this act took a remarkable step, and formally recognized the free union as a valid form of marriage. The stern moralist may strongly object on religious grounds, but on natural grounds it was held that there could be no objection. These households were as law-abiding, as well-behaved as others, and equally entitled to consideration. Clearly this is largely a question of convention – certainly not a question of vice or virtue. It would shock the good Catholic more to hear of the marriage of a priest – though the marriage of clergymen is not only accepted but regarded as wholesome in Protestant countries – than it would shock the orthodox Frenchman to hear of such a free union. No

deduction in one sense or the other should be drawn from these facts.

*

Again, although I would not be understood as arguing for the State control of prostitution, although there is much to be said both for and against the French system, at least it is permissible to declare that such control is no evidence of exceptional vice. There is no vital difference between unregulated and regulated prostitution. The French, rightly or wrongly, believe it to be better to acknowledge prostitution and to act accordingly. It is not the regulation that creates the facts which are fundamentally the same in Anglo-Saxon countries, where it is believed to be better to close one's eyes to them and to attempt without the smallest success to suppress them. In Anglo-Saxon countries vice is driven underground and becomes more noisome.

The French *fille de joie* differs from her sister in other lands in that she does not commonly lose her self-respect. She is just as thrifty as the rest of the French people. It is often her ambition to save up sufficient money to retire and to lead a life of perfect respectability. Frequently she succeeds. She is aware of all the perils of her unhappy profession and with clear eyes endeavours to avoid them. If she has illegitimate children she will make the most pathetic sacrifices to bring them up well, sometimes even in an odour of sanctity, and to start them on a successful career. She has listened to all the arguments of the Mrs. Warren of Bernard Shaw, and she interprets them in accordance with her intelligence rather than in accordance with her temperament. It must be confessed that the girls in the dressmaking and other establishments are ill paid, and working in luxurious surroundings, in quarters frequented by the rich, they are subjected to continual temptation.

The young men in France of good families are, unlike their sisters, given their freedom at an early age. Even as students they may set up an irregular *ménage*. Little blame is attached to

them; they are even encouraged to sow their wild oats; but they are expected when they reach marriageable age to abandon their student liaisons and to found a family. One cannot but regret this kind of education, which frequently results in a masculine cynicism in regard to sex matters which is never lost.

Chapter 7

A PICTURE OF THE PEASANT

THE peasant is the most important person in France. He is well aware of his importance, and between him and the townsman there is a perpetual feud. Some politicians – belonging both to the Nationalist and the Radical side – have considered it necessary to placate the peasant by favouring high prices for food. The citizen blames the countryman for *la vie chère*, and the countryman, looking down upon the citizen, considers that he has a right to obtain the highest possible prices. This antagonism has always existed; it is in the nature of things; but particularly since the War has it developed. It was not easy to induce the agriculturalist to produce in the same quantities as before the War. He was handicapped in many ways and although successive Governments had treated the peasant with the greatest respect and had endeavoured not to disturb him, he could not of course be exempted from military service. The women and the boys and the old men and the peasant-proprietors who, on one excuse or the other, were left behind, carried on admirably, but it was inevitable that many workers should never return, that land should fall out of cultivation, and that there should be a permanent decline in production.

France before the War produced practically all the wheat she required. She is now obliged to import wheat. The French people are great bread eaters, and this diminution of the wheat yield is of much moment. Unless the deficit can be made up within the next few years France will cease to be one of the most self-contained countries in the world. The estimates of harvests in the autumn, official or unofficial, are usually erroneous, and one has to wait for the returns of the following year. Taking therefore the last verified statistics, I find that France produced in round figures 75,000,000 quintals of wheat as against 87,000,000 quintals in 1913. It must be remembered, too, that since 1920 the Alsace-Lorraine production has been

added and is included in the returns. The decline is therefore more serious than appears at first sight. In 1913 there were, if one takes all cereals, 13,511,400 hectares under cultivation; in 1924 there were, including the Alsace-Lorraine area, only 9,590,300 hectares. The curious thing is that in the post-War years there has been a steady diminution of cereal-growing land. This is despite the gradual restoration of the devastated areas in the North. One is forced therefore to the conclusion that we are witnessing a significant change – that in France as in other countries there is a drift townwards. The magnet of the great towns draws all the casual labour, and as there was already a dearth of labour, French farming for the most part being carried on by the small owner, the countryside is in danger of being depleted.

The census figures clearly show a change in the distribution of population during the past century. In 1846 the population of France was 35,400,000, of which 26,750,000, or about 75%, were living in the rural districts – by which is meant villages of not more than 2,000 inhabitants. The town-dwellers numbered only 8,650,000. In 1911 the total population was 39,600,000. There were 17,500,000 town-dwellers and 22,100,000 country-dwellers. In 1921, out of a total population of 39,200,000, there were 18,200,000 urban residents and 21,000,000 rural residents – that is to say the rural residents are now only 53% of the total population. The peasant-owner is devoted to the soil. He works hard and has few pleasures. The system of peasant proprietorship serves to check the exodus from the villages, but in spite of generation after generation of agricultural traditions, the town beckons to the countryside and with the shortage of labour much land has had to be converted into pasture.

As for the areas which are wheat-producing, they fell from six and a half million hectares in 1913 to five and a half million hectares in 1923. When one takes the actual production it is necessary to recall that excessive rain and generally unfavour-

able weather have caused considerable fluctuations. But when all allowances have been made the conclusion, as it seems to me, is that France will have to make the most strenuous efforts, and encourage the farmer still further if she is to get back to the pre-War position. In 1923 France had to import over 14,000,000 quintals of wheat. Various regulations have had for object compulsory blending with wheat flour of barley, rye, and other substitutes, in the proportion of 8%. It cannot be pretended that the destruction of wheat-growing land in the Nord, Aisne, and Pas-de-Calais is responsible for the present state of affairs because it can be shown that these particular *départements* have recovered their pre-War output. If one examines these statistics as to rye, oats, barley, potatoes, sugar-beet, fodder-beet, buckwheat and Indian corn, one will find the same reduction all round. Livestock has been replenished. The only really serious reduction is in the number of sheep, which has fallen from 16,000,000 to 10,000,000. Pigs, which numbered 7,000,000 in 1913, number five and a half million now. Cattle, which were estimated at 14,787,710 before the War, have fallen by about a million. Horses, which were something over 3,000,000, are now something under 3,000,000.

*

Can the labour shortage be made up? There is a loss of over a million and a quarter persons employed in agriculture, and efforts have been made to bring into the country Polish, Italian, Spanish, Belgian and Czecho-Slovakian field workers. But in addition all kinds of co-operative suggestions have been put forward, and some of them are being carried into effect. France has a rich soil, and over half the population of the country still lives, in one way or another, on agriculture. Over 80% of the land yields profit, but to understand the true agricultural problem in France, and to realize why the most has never been made of the natural resources, it should be recalled that before the Revolution the French peasant was a serf, a mere beast of

the field, and that, after the Revolution, which destroyed the Feudal system, the land was divided up into small holdings. There are about 8,000,000 separate landowners in France, and one-fourth of the holdings are under fifteen acres. The land is well worked: the peasant-owner does not spare himself, but he is essentially an individualist, a little distrustful of his neighbours, afraid of associations which might increase the common welfare. His methods are often primitive. You can still see slow-moving oxen drawing the ploughs, and the scythe and the sickle are still used instead of machinery in some parts of France. Even the flail is not forgotten, and although threshing machines worked by steam sometimes travel about from one small holding to another, there existed not many years ago, to my personal knowledge, and may exist now, threshing machines worked by horses.

Now it is felt by the authorities that something should be done to introduce more up-to-date methods, but it will be apparent that the peasant cannot afford to purchase machinery for himself. Whatever is done must be done on a co-operative basis. A certain progress is being made, and Farmers' Associations are being formed. The municipalities are helping in this movement, and a good deal of propaganda is being undertaken by the Government. Agricultural syndicates and banks have been formed. Still it remains true that the peasant is somewhat refractory to new ideas and prefers to stand, a proud proprietor, asking nobody's help on his little patch of land. Recently it has been enthusiastically proposed to electrify the countryside – France has so many rivers and waterfalls which might be harnessed in the production of electric light and power that it would be comparatively easy to carry at cheap rates to the farmer power for the working of his machines, and light for the improvement of his habitation. One is a little sceptical. The peasant is suspicious of innovations.

*

Many pictures have been drawn of the typical French peasant-

proprietor. Zola, in *La Terre*, gave the most horrible account of the French countryside. He depicted all the vice, the misery, the filth of the worker on the land. He accumulated his effects until one was revolted by the brutality of it all. Zola aimed at realism; he provided himself with the most complete documentation. Doubtless everything that he wrote could be justified by the production of a number of specific facts. And yet the result as a whole seems to me to be entirely false. There are gruesome crimes, unspeakable obscenities, and the most sordid appetites to be found in the French countryside; but Zola was compelled, like every other novelist, to select, and he selected such material as best fitted into his canvas. He took an incorrigibly gloomy view, and consciously or unconsciously sought whatever enabled him to sustain the thesis which he, impelled by his temperament, chose. His narrative is composed not of normal incidents but of exceptional episodes brought together in such manner as to make his book, with all its documentation, absolutely worthless as a document. There is much that is hard, unsympathetic, utterly selfish in the character of the French peasant, but with all his faults he is, if not a lovable, at any rate an admirable figure. For a long period I lived among the French peasants and saw their good and their bad qualities. They are laborious, independent, true to their ideals, and there is about them a dark grandeur. They live close to Nature, who is a hard task-master: they are uncultured, and have no knowledge and do not wish to have any knowledge of the great cities which they feed, and which they think ought to show them fitting gratitude instead of perpetually grumbling and seeking to reduce the price of the peasant's labour.

"Jacques Bonhomme," as the peasant is called, though inarticulate and dour and distrustful, has a profound influence on the whole character and destiny of the nation. It is not merely that the politicians must consider his wishes, but that in some mysterious way he leavens the whole people. Many of those who

have, in this democratic country, risen to the highest posts, have come from the peasant class, and emerging, they have not shed the hereditary habits of the peasant. The President of the Republic is the son of small cultivators, and he is by no means a rare example. Closely as the real peasant sticks to the soil, there is here and there a specially gifted son who by dogged perseverance climbs the educational ladder, becomes a lawyer or a professor or a politician or a successful business man, not in spite of, but because of the virtues of his class. Whatever Fate may hold for him, he keeps his connections with his native place; he retains his hundred peculiarities, and he engrafts them even upon the townsmen. If he is sparing – though not of his labour – it is because without the strictest economy he would soon find himself in the most serious difficulties. Since the War the agriculturalist has been accused of enriching himself at the expense of the townsfolk, but though this is true to some extent of certain orders of agriculturalists, notably in bountiful Normandy, on the whole the peasant remains poor and has a more arduous and less recompensed existence than has the city worker. The proverbial *bas de laine* may be stuffed with gold louis or bank notes or *Bons de la Défense Nationale*, but the fortune is rarely large and it is well earned by incessant toil and frugality. The peasant wants to feel safe: he has no hope or desire to be rich. If he is exacting in regard to others, he is exacting in regard to himself. It is after all little more than a century since he has been free, and there still remains in his mind the memory of oppression. La Bruyère, in the days of the Versailles splendour, wrote of the peasant: "One sees about the land certain animals living on roots." No wonder that he is careful, and if he is excessively so it may well be forgiven him. He is shrewd and intelligent; he is quick to turn everything to advantage; he is sceptical and cautious. He is courteous to those who treat him as an equal, but he will not cringe to anyone. Always does he strive to add another plot of land to his own, to *arrondir son bien*,

but the inheritance laws often mean a new division of the fields,

The peasant is a true Republican. In the South he is Radical, as in a more scattered way in other parts of France. He believes that he owes his position to the Republic, and it is extremely difficult to conceive any drastic changes in the French system either in the direction of Monarchy or of Socialism. Monarchy seems to him to imply a régime under which his possessions would be threatened. Monarchy is also in France associated with Clericalism, and for the most part the peasant is anti-Clerical. This does not mean that he is not a Catholic; he may himself attend church regularly or not, but in any case he was probably married in a church and his children will receive their First Communion when they are old enough. It is not hostility to religion as such which animates him: he is tolerant of the Church when he is not positively friendly. But in so far as the *curé* represents a political force he is regarded as anti-Republican, and there still goes on in the countryside a long struggle between the *instituteur*, the little local teacher who single-handed undertakes the education of thirty, forty or even fifty children of all ages in the tiny school building, and the *curé*. The *curé* deplores the text-books, which in his eyes contain anti-religious teaching, and the *instituteur* resents the attempted interference with his prerogatives. Often – I think I may say usually – the mayor is on the side of the *instituteur*. The *instituteur*, as the one educated man of the village, frequently acts as the secretary at the *Mairie*. There is in every village the old clash of Church and State. Were it not for the peasant and the ingrained anti-Clericalism of the peasant, it is doubtful whether Radicalism as such could exist in France. At all costs this contention must therefore, in the interest of politicians, be kept up. On the other hand, it seems a hopeless task to try to convert the peasant to Socialism. Occasionally both the Communists and the Socialists in France prepare plans for the conversion of the countryside, but they do not put them into practice. How are they to approach the pea-

sant, who is the individualist *par excellence*? The system under which he lives is in a far truer sense than is Capitalism the exact antithesis of Socialism. It is therefore not easy to imagine any kind of revolution in France. It might momentarily succeed in the towns, but against the solid opposition of the countryside on which the towns depend it must inevitably collapse. Here is the French bulwark against Socialism: the multiplicity of owners.

*

There are of course a number of comparatively large landowners in France, and it is these men who have, adopting with some efficiency the ordinary methods of capitalism, amassed relatively big gains. Generally, however, the owner who has more land than he can exploit himself resorts to the *métayage* system. He divides up his land into small farms, each of which he hands over to a farmer to work. These farmers are in a very similar situation to that of the peasant-proprietor. They pay no rent and are mostly left to their own devices; they are completely master of the *terre* entrusted to their charge. There is a division of profits with the actual owner. The precise terms are regulated by local usage, and vary according to the locality. Obviously it is necessary that the landlord or his representative should live in the vicinity and should keep a close eye on the working of the farm.

There exists a class known as *gentilshommes campagnards*, which, however, tends to disappear. The expression should be translated not as "country gentlemen" but rather as "gentlemen peasants." Their families have once belonged to the smaller nobility, but they are generally without capital and have long associated with the peasants and acquired their manners. At the same time they are usually fairly well read and try to preserve as far as possible the traditions of old nobility. These rustic gentlemen, remnants of a territorial aristocracy, bound to the soil which they love, appear somewhat pathetic in a world of commerce and scientific efficiency. As for the inhabitants of the

chateaux, they have for the most part lost all touch with the peasant-proprietors who have as little as possible to do with such survivors of feudalism as remain. The chateaux have, in fact, in many cases changed hands, and are merely the country resorts of rich town-dwellers. Particularly during the past few years have I noticed that more and more the chateaux centuries old are being sold to those who have no connection whatever with the district, and are unknown to the inhabitants of the village.

*

The climate of France varies considerably. There is Brittany bleak in parts but on the whole mild, with soft rains, its coasts washed by the Gulf Stream. There is the region of which Paris is the centre, which is neither so damp nor so warm as Brittany. There is the Gironde, warm and sunny; there is the district of the Vosges with snow and frost in winter, and heat and drought in summer. There is the Lyonnais climate, with severe and sudden changes and the mistral coming down the Rhone Valley from the Alps. There is Auvergne, the region of extinct volcanoes, which knows the extremes of heat and cold. There is the Mediterranean coast which is warm and dry, though Marseilles, standing on the estuary of the Rhone, experiences the cold violent mistral. Naturally the agricultural production varies according to these varying climates. Wheat grows in greatest abundance on the great plateau of the Beauce between the Seine and the Loire, and it also grows in Flanders, Artois, Picardy, Brie.

The wine-growers are to be found everywhere, but chiefly about Bordeaux and in Burgundy and in the Champagne district. Languedoc produces much, as does the Valley of the Loire. The Valleys of the Rhone, the Dordogne and the Charente are among other well-known wine-growing districts. There has been much heart-burning in France because of the adoption of Prohibition in America, and of various restrictive laws and duties by other countries. The wine-growers complain that

their export trade has suffered enormously, and is likely to suffer still more. The ordinary cultivator of the vine resembles in many respects the peasant-farmer, but a good deal of the wine trade in France is not in the hands of the small owner rightly so called, but in the hands of owners of celebrated wine chateaux who are often absentees. Their business is highly commercialized, but there still exists a considerable number of wine-growers who are men of small means. They have had to fight against many difficulties; especially since 1870. Their crops were ruined by mildew, by phylloxera, and other enemies, and when these were overcome by the planting of another variety of vine which was more refractory there was a period of over-production. Prices went down and the wine-grower was often ruined. In 1907 there was a revolt which was only suppressed after loss of life by the tact and strength of M. Clemenceau. There were moments when the whole of the Midi seemed to be catching fire, and the situation was as ugly as it well could be. Matters have righted themselves since then. Prices to-day are high, and France is actually importing a considerable bulk of wine. Algeria leads the way with well over 5,000,000 hectolitres and Spain imports over a million and a half hectolitres into France. Portugal varies from year to year, but in 1923 sent to France about half a million hectolitres. Altogether France takes from other countries much more than she exports. One may put the figures roundly as about 8,000,000 hectolitres imported to less than 2,000,000 hectolitres exported. Formerly France exported nearly three and a half million hectolitres, and the drop is largely due to the closing of the American and Russian markets.

Nor should one forget market gardening, in which the French are remarkably expert. *La petite culture* is practised chiefly around Paris, and is exceedingly profitable. The French have a knack of making the most of any odd corner of land. All over the country vegetables such as potatoes, asparagus, artichokes, onions, garlic, salads are produced. Fruit-growing is practised

on a large scale. Beetroot is a flourishing form of culture. Tobacco, flax and hemp are grown in the North and West. Whatever industrial changes there may be in France, agriculture should remain the backbone of French prosperity, and the peasant-proprietor with his wheat, his cattle, his wines, his cheeses, his fruits and his *primeurs* remains the central figure of the French nation.

Chapter 8

TYPES OF TOWN DWELLERS

THE town-dwellers may be divided into three principal classes, who nevertheless tend to merge into each other. The old nobility, the bourgeoisie and the workers offer many points of contrast, but they also touch each other at many points. The black-coated workers may be regarded as the lower bourgeoisie, though their affinities with the class that is somewhat despised by the workers make them the butt of much mockery. To be a "bourgeois" in the eyes of the manual labourer is to be scorned. The bourgeoisie is that vast middle class which takes in the poorest paid clerk and may include the rich industrialist. It even includes the scions of the old nobility; which is rapidly becoming extinct, and is seeking refuge in the ranks of the bourgeoisie.

There is still an aristocracy, sadly faded and often impecunious, round and about the Boulevard Saint-Germain, but its influence in any sphere whatever has almost entirely disappeared. Its chateaux have passed for the most part into other hands. Those who are possessed of real energy have voluntarily dropped their titles and have engaged in the bourgeois professions. Some sorely-tried members of the old nobility have married American wives and have thus replenished their fortunes. The former contempt for work and for money-making has disappeared to a large extent, and marquises and counts and barons can be found in the financial world. Still, although the barriers are being broken down, tradition still lingers; and an authentic aristocracy which keeps itself to itself is to be found in a few salons. It is regarded as an anomaly in the Third Republic. One need do no more than address a Frenchman, whatever title he may possess, as "Monsieur." It is curious, however, that until the Radical Government came into power in 1924 there was no formal refusal to recognize titles. Further, many Frenchmen who have no right whatever to a title, have introduced before

their name the particle "de." It is asserted that the greater part of those who claim titles of nobility do so without warrant. Under the three Republics there have been no titles conferred, and the old noble families have been dying out. Yet there are more titles in existence now than ever. One cannot find up-to-date statistics, but in 1887 it was shown that there were more than 60,000 "aristocrats" – 100 princes, 2,500 dukes, 5,000 marquises, 12,000 counts and so forth. It is true that many titles have been created since 1804. Napoleon made 9 princes, 32 dukes, 388 counts, and 1,090 barons. The Restoration conferred nobility on 17 dukes, 70 marquises, 83 counts, 62 viscounts and 215 barons.

The *vieille noblesse* looks with some disdain on the new nobility. There are families so ancient that their original family names have been entirely forgotten. They are named after the estates which they once possessed. There is a common misconception of the significance of the particle "de": it does not necessarily figure in the name of a titled person and it does not in itself imply nobility. The French names that one most frequently encounters, such as "Dupont," "Duval" and so forth, names as plebeian as "Smith" and "Jones," include the "de," which simply means that the families came from certain places. The War badly hit many of the truly noble families who held aloof from business, and with the collapse of the franc their discomfiture was complete. As a class they clung to their traditions and found themselves left behind in a capitalistic age.

The Bill which was introduced in 1924 provided that the registration of titles of nobility by the Chancellery be abolished. They are not to be officially recognized or mentioned in notarial documents. Even foreign titles come under the ban. The preamble to the measure set forth the incompatibility of the existence of the Republic with the existence of titles, but it goes on to explain that the Republic has nothing to fear from the maintenance of such archaic customs. The Bill will not of

course suppress the current usage of titles of nobility in ordinary social life. It is to be feared that the more France does away with official titles, the more titles into whose authenticity nobody can inquire will be adopted. The registration of titles was useful in exercising a check upon the use of fanciful distinctions. *Noblesse oblige* will come to have less and less meaning in France, and although a pathetic few will continue to look back wistfully to the past, to cherish immemorial traditions, and perhaps even idly to dream of a Restoration, it may dogmatically be asserted that the day of the old nobility is altogether over in France.

*

The bourgeoisie with its special ideals, its special temperament, its special predilection for the middle path, is a modern growth. To-day it dominates French town life. This is true of all the towns; it is true of Paris, but it is even more peculiarly true of the provinces. In the provincial towns one is altogether in an atmosphere of bourgeoisie. Moderation is the keynote, and all the vices and virtues which have been described in earlier chapters are veneered over by respectability. The bourgeois is nothing if he is not respectable – though to be respectable does not exclude the enjoyment of those *gauloiseries* that few people who have not had the longest and closest association with the French will ever understand. The Third Republic has been governed altogether by the bourgeois. From the first President of the Republic, Monsieur Thiers, to the present occupant of the Elysée, practically all the succeeding Chiefs of State have belonged unmistakably to the middle classes, though a few have emerged from the peasant class. For the most part the Prime Ministers have come from this section of society. The nobility has held aloof. The Republic is built on the bourgeoisie and on the peasantry, but it is the former which supplies the active politicians.

It may be questioned whether the bourgeoisie is to be praised

or reproached, but at any rate in France its humdrum qualities are appreciated. In the revues of the cabarets there is much good-natured chaff of the statesmen who happen to be at the top, and always does their private life – or what is believed to be their private life – come under examination. The jokes are directed chiefly against their economy, their prudent habit of carrying umbrellas, their liking for a game of dominoes, their affection for their family, and so forth. Ridicule of this kind certainly does not kill – it is rather intended to prick pomp, to explode ceremony, and to bring down the rulers of France to the excellent domestic level of the ordinary citizen. Rightly understood, it is a eulogy of the bourgeoisie. In the year in which I write there have been four or five books published to celebrate the virtues of the bourgeois. He has become the typical figure of France. The bourgeois spirit is in all Montaigne ever wrote in spite of the superior intelligence of Montaigne. Molière has painted the bourgeois in most of his plays, usually with mockery. Flaubert has depicted the bourgeois and his environment, but he was too arbitrary when he said, "I call a bourgeois whoever has base thoughts." If the bourgeois has, like the peasant, too great a love for money – though he seldom possesses it in really large sums – he accompanies this love with the highest regard for probity and honour, and indeed values money because it enables him to remain faithful to his ideals. The inclination of the bourgeois is not to launch into money-making enterprises, and anything that savours of speculation or of adventure is taboo. His inclination is rather towards the liberal professions in which it is scarcely possible in France to enrich oneself. Nothing could be more honourable. One must remark, however, that since the War there has been a tendency towards change. The liberal professions which used to ensure at least a decent existence, are now so ill paid that the younger men are compelled to abandon them and to turn in increasing numbers towards financial pursuits. How far the change will

prove to be superficial and transitory it is too early to decide. The bourgeoisie has also been invaded by the *nouveaux riches*, who do not raise the intellectual level. In spite of these phenomena, it is still true that all the intellectual movements in France come from the middle classes.

Inside the very large span of the bourgeoisie there are practically no social divisions; members of the same family may be officers in the army, tradesmen, lawyers and even artists, for the average artist in France is not a Bohemian but a Bourgeois whose life is well regulated. There is no scorn felt by the members of the liberal professions for those who are engaged in business. There may be some distinction between the *haute* and the *petite* bourgeoisie, but it is difficult to say where one ends and the other begins. The bourgeoisie spends with more freedom and amuses itself more frequently than used to be the case before the War, but on the whole it remains solid, comfortable, cautious, taking the utmost pride in its fixed position, without much ambition, playing always for safety, happy to own something, however small that something may be. The moral effect of the feeling of possession, of stability, of family solidarity, is great, and this moral effect has much more chance of exercising itself in France than anywhere else. Outside the great French bourgeoisie there may be a wide margin in which happen the incidents which we are apt to think characteristically French, but the vast majority of the people knows nothing of this margin, or of its happenings, except what it reads in the newspapers which must necessarily hold up the mirror to the exceptional side of life. It is not in the sober, simple ranks of the bourgeoisie that the adventurer, the financial adventurer or the sexual adventurer, operates. The bourgeois does not seek to belong to the flashy world which calls itself *Tout Paris*. In spite of the fringe of fantasy, there dwell at the big centre of things the little people who really make up France. There they abide, tranquil, cheerfully philosophical, happy families without

a history, or at any rate without such histories as get into the newspapers. They are realists, slightly tinged with cynicism, completely insular, not touched by the cosmopolitanism which rages outside this compact circle. The bourgeoisie might be financially shaken by a revolution were it to come, but the revolution would take place over its head; it would have no part or lot in it, and it would remain substantially the same. It is a great clan, with its network of alliances, a State within the State. It has natural artistic tastes, but art must not be allowed to clog the wheels of daily life; art must be for it essentially ornamental. The State officials and the multitude of local officials who, together, may number anything up to 700,000, belong to this class.

*

The artisan who preserves a true sense of craftsmanship approximates to the bourgeois. This kind of craftsman, truly artistic, is more numerous in France than in most countries. Particularly does he excel in clever furniture making, and, for that matter, in furniture faking, and in wrought-iron work, in jewellery, pottery, *tapisserie*, and in kindred crafts. But when we come down to the masses of workers, we find them very different from the bourgeoisie in their whole outlook. They are far more careless. They may even be rightly accused of improvidence. They are ready to be inflamed by the Socialist orator. They have a passion for justice and for equality, they are always willing to indulge in demonstrations which usually do not mean much but which nevertheless may appear alarming.

At the present time I reckon the earnings of the more or less skilled workers at twenty-five to fifty francs a day, and the average amount on which it is just possible for the ordinary working-class family to live may be put at 30 francs a day. This means that wages should run from 800 to 1,000 francs a month, that is to say, three or four times as much as before the War. The franc has depreciated in value by three-fourths,

and as it is estimated that, taking everything in, the cost of commodities is about five times as much as in 1913, the worker is no better off to-day than formerly. Moreover, the wages in certain occupations have by no means kept pace with the general upward cost of living. I observe that in some of the provinces a typist may be paid as little as 150 frs. or 200 frs. a month, and in Paris itself a *midinette* or a *cousette* in one of the fashion houses which sell their wares extremely dear, may be paid 15 frs. a day or even less. On the whole, the French worker is poorly paid; he feels there is little chance of ever getting out of the groove; and he does not therefore try to save. The usual French virtue of thrift is somewhat lacking among the workers – perhaps for a good reason. Social reformers also deplore the ravages of alcohol among the working-classes, and here again the French workman is differentiated from members of the other French classes. There is a *marchand de vin* at every street corner in the populous districts, and the worker drinks not in comfortable cafés but *sur le zinc*. Against this we must put his remarkable manual skill. He does not take readily to the exigencies of mass production, but individually he shows exceptional initiative; he is ingenious and patient. As a mechanician he is probably unsurpassed.

The co-operative movement, though making some headway, has never attained anything like the same proportions as, for example, in England. Trade Unionism, even in its Continental form of Syndicalism, is relatively feeble. It is difficult to get the French worker to unite. He is far too independent and individualistic. If he is a good workman he thinks he can do without formal unions; if he is a bad workman, he is indifferent to appeals for solidarity. In its organized shape, Syndicalism not only makes no progress but has received several set-backs since the War. Its doctrine is scarcely that of Trade Unionism; it suggests revolution, the taking control of the means of production by the workers. The syndicates have the smallest of

incomes, and a low proportion of adherents. The worker in short is comparatively unorganized in France, and such organizations as he has often mistake their strength. They rely chiefly on their ability to rally the workers on some issue. They are agitating rather than calculating. In 1920 the *Confédération Générale de Travail*, as the central body was known, was smashed as a result of the abortive railway strike. It is under many legal disabilities, especially with regard to the right to possess property. Only with the greatest difficulty is the Confederation recovering from the check which it experienced a few years ago. Monsieur Jouhaux, for many years the leader of this movement, a man who during the War helped the authorities considerably and who is held in the highest respect, strives almost in vain. Either the worker is penniless or he cherishes the hope of himself becoming a bourgeois, that is to say, a member of the possessing classes. Syndicalism is, nominally at any rate, against Parliamentary institutions. It has no close association with organized Socialism; on the contrary it professes to be entirely non-political, to be purely economic in its purpose, and it is distrustful of the politician whatever colours he may affect. The Syndicalist is not only anti-capitalist, he is anti-militarist, anti-clerical, and is accused of being anti-patriotic.

There is little prospect of progress, it seems to me, in this direction, but one should perhaps qualify this generalization by a word concerning the curious Syndicalist movement which is spreading in the ranks of the school-teachers. Even the State officials in Government offices, though their associations are frowned upon by the authorities, and have doubtful legal warrant, are turning towards Syndicalism. They are realizing, these two classes who are generally regarded as belonging to the bourgeoisie, that their lot is in some respects the most pitiful of all. These black-coated workers have all the disadvantages of being ill paid and unorganized, and of belonging

to the ranks of respectability. Discontented, they are also intelligent, and they feel the need of solidarity. They are fighting hard to obtain better conditions and they do not care overmuch whether they scandalize the true bourgeoisie. Their influence, if they once effect a strong union among themselves and are impregnated with Syndicalist ideas, will obviously be great. Their numbers are already sufficiently large, but they could act even more effectively than their mere numbers would indicate. No wonder that the authorities are looking anxiously at this movement among the black-coated workers, and are wondering whether the wedge which will split up the placid bourgeoisie is being driven in on this side.

Chapter 9

A SURVEY OF THE PRESS

EVER since I remember I have been reading doleful accounts of the decline of French journalism. The Press is not what it used to be: that is the burden of the cry. Naturally one thinks the older type of newspaper better than the newer type – though one agrees that the new type has qualities of its own. In former days – and that not long before the War – a French newspaper was cleverly written. It was not filled with sensational "stories," it was not illustrated with portraits of criminals and of politicians, it was not eager for the latest piece of news red hot from the wires; it was rather a critical sheet. There were criticisms of politics, there were criticisms of the theatre – not necessarily of the previous night's play – there were criticisms of books. There was shown by every writer a knowledge of the world and a familiarity with letters; and it was considered proper to polish one's style. In everything there was a real literary flavour. Some of the journalists were exceedingly good, and some of them were exceedingly bad writers, while others were indifferent, but all of them attempted to make witty or wise comment in the most elegant manner of which they were capable.

The change came a few years ago. Journalism became at once more enterprising and less literary. To-day one French morning paper is frankly modelled on American methods, while several evening papers scream the news, which may in reality be trivial, in the most blatant headlines. The French newspapers are, compared with the newspapers of England and America, small. They run from six to eight pages. There are as a rule about three pages of news matter and articles. In addition there are serial stories and short stories, comic pages and so forth. The rest of the paper may be made up of advertisements. Nothing is more noticeable than the growth of advertising, though the French papers are still far from being

blessed or cursed with the quantity of advertisements that come to those organs which are published in the English language. It is only now that the salesman in France realizes the importance of presenting his wares to the public through the medium of the Press, but he is learning quickly. The big emporiums, though they mainly rely on the elaborate and beautifully illustrated catalogues which they send out by post, now and again decide that they can reach a larger circle of readers at less expense, and with more satisfactory results, by printing their catalogues in the journals. Up-to-date manufacturers of motor-cars believe in the virtues of a whole-page display. But for the most part this kind of advertising is hardly understood except by a few soap-makers and the inventors of the latest substitute for absinthe. Doubtless the papers will add more and more pages as the advertising craze develops in France, but as yet most traders are content with the smallest announcements in the newspapers, and have not come to appreciate the Press as a vehicle for a pseudo-scientific appeal to the public.

The French newspapers have now correspondents in many capitals of the world, but they lag behind British and American newspapers in this respect. They cannot bring themselves to spend large sums of money on cables; they avail themselves of the agencies – which are certainly not for their part as well served as modern journalism and modern diplomacy would seem to demand. They pick up a good deal from the English newspapers, and the information of many prominent journals comes to them by way of London. There are signs that the inadequacy of the system is being recognized, for after all the news intended for any particular country is coloured in accordance with the wishes of the country which is to receive it. The French papers have a long way to go before they will come up to the American or British news standard. At the same time, though there are many sheets which still endeavour to be sprightly and well written, there has been undoubtedly a falling

off in style. A glance back at the files of pre-war days will prove that if something has been gained from a half-hearted imitation of Anglo-Saxon journals, a great deal that was characteristic has been lost. It would be wrong to suggest that there remain no vigorous polemics, no pleasant gossipers, no artistic writers. The Henri Bérauds shine out splendidly, and they defend journalism from the gibe that, properly performed, it still remains unworthy of the literary man. But the place of the Bérauds is shrinking: the demand is for information which will amuse the largest possible number of readers.

*

Large circulations are sought and are achieved. The *Petit Parisien* is understood to have the largest circulation of any daily newspaper in the world – something approaching two million. It must be admitted that the *Petit Parisien* devotes a great deal of space to foreign news in which the French public is alleged to take little interest. Perhaps the success of this newspaper should persuade other editors that serious information is genuinely needed.

The tone of the *Petit Parisien* is always moderate, it judiciously supports whatever government is in power. This may be said of most of the big newspapers. The *Echo de Paris* is among the leading organs the only really partisan paper. It is very ably produced, its writers, including the famous "Pertinax" (André Géraud) are excellent and informative. It is always serious though not dull; in politics it is intensely Nationalist and it is Roman Catholic in its sympathies. Maurice Barrès did much of his best work in the *Echo de Paris*. The *Matin*, which is the brightest of the French papers, is the paper of the hurried reader. Most of its articles are short and pointed. Senator Henry de Jouvenel, its editor, is a distinguished man of liberal leanings, a superb orator, a protagonist of the League of Nations, a politician who may yet go far. But the influence of the joint editor, M. Stéphane Lauzanne, is certainly more marked in the

production of the paper. Unfortunately from time to time the *Matin* shows an anti-English tendency which is curiously allied with a pro-American attitude. The *Journal*, like the *Matin*, is essentially a Parisian organ, while the *Petit Parisien* has a more widely diffused circulation. The *Journal* has been highly successful of recent years. Its cartoons are among the best of their kind. The *Petit Journal*, which is always interesting, has not the vogue it used to have, but it maintains its place honourably among the big five. It is understood to be under the financial control of M. Loucheur.

The Paris Press generally may be divided into two categories; there is the Press of Information, and there is the Press of Opinion. It is not always easy to decide whether a particular newspaper should be placed in one or the other category. The *Quotidien* for example, aspires to be both a journal of information and a journal of opinion. It is enterprisingly Radical. It was founded after the War by M. Henri Dumay, with the co-operation of many readers of a Radical weekly paper, *Le Progrès Civique*, who felt that the time had come to try to purify the French Press. At that moment all the important papers were supporting M. Poincaré and clamouring for the occupation of the Ruhr. But it sufficed that the Bloc National should be beaten at the Elections for the important papers with rare exceptions to take up the cause of M. Herriot and his followers. There is nothing particularly cynical in this – they take the view that they should support whatever government is in power and strive to make the accepted policy of the country effective. The foreign reader of the French newspapers should therefore be careful in drawing political deductions from the Press. It will support M. Briand one day and the next day when M. Briand has fallen will support with equal vehemence M. Poincaré. The result is that real public opinion may be stifled.

It is impossible not to say a word on a most delicate subject – that of the willingness of a section of the Press in France to

receive subsidies from the secret Government funds. The French Press has been accused of corruption, and specific statements have been published in *L'Humanité*, the Socialist daily founded by Jean Jaurès which was afterwards taken over by the Communists. It is impossible to deny the facts, whatever construction one may put upon them. It seems to me that generalizations would be inaccurate. In certain cases there is no doubt that large sums of money have been received, not merely from the French funds and from financial companies, but from foreign governments and banks. It is highly unfortunate and is a source of weakness not only to the French papers which lose a large measure of their authority, but to France in general. Transactions of this kind are not even confined to newspapers in their corporate capacity, but are entered into by some individual journalists – some of them among the best known. But one must not conclude that the whole of the French Press, or the majority of the hard-working French journalists can be bribed. In passing any judgment one has to bear in mind the accepted canons of the Press of the country. One cannot approve; one would like to see a greater independence and to be surer of the mainsprings of action; but one cannot altogether condemn those proprietors who would frankly argue that special propaganda must be paid for. It is difficult to discriminate between bona fide commercial publicity and secret publicity which is made to pass as an impartial statement of facts or an honest expression of opinion. It is highly desirable that there should be a complete revision of newspaper practices in France. The Press of Information should, at any rate, be above suspicion. It is perhaps less illegitimate for the Press of Opinion to find support, political and financial, since it is openly pursuing a definite purpose.

*

The Journaux d'Opinion in France often depend on one or two men whose signatures are always to be found at the foot

of the leading articles. Is the day of personal journalism nearly over in France? For many years it has been asserted that the type of journalist who may be represented by Henri Rochefort or Edouard Drumont is dying, that there is now no Emile de Girardin, no Louis Veuillot, no Paul de Cassagnac, whose sword was as busy as his pen. There are indeed no such picturesque figures, and duelling has grown very rare since the War. But there are still many personal journalists whose signatures are indispensable to the success of their organ. There is, for example, Léon Daudet, of the *Action Française*, the Royalist sheet, whose truculent articles, together with the quieter but more incisive writings of Charles Maurras, keep together a band of admirers. There is the *Eclair*, of which the daily commentary of Emile Buré is the particular ornament. There is *L'Homme Libre*, which for years furnished a platform to Clemenceau, and now is the pulpit of Eugène Lautier. In the *République Française*, which was founded by Gambetta, Grosclaude, one of the most amusing political writers of the day, is to be read. *La Victoire* has for director Gustave Hervé, once a violent Socialist, afterwards an ardent patriot, and the confidant of Millerand, always expressing himself with clarity and in downright terms. The *Ère Nouvelle* is an admirably written Radical sheet, and *L'Avenir* is the organ of the Nationalists. *L'œuvre* was founded by Gustave Téry. It is one of the smartest papers in France. Among other things it is taken for the daily humorous column of Georges de la Fouchardière.

There is a host of others, many of them fallen from the high estate which they used to hold, and living on the memory of the past. There are journals which are read for a time and then disappear. Thus the *Echo National*, founded by André Tardieu, had a few years of vigorous life and then was allowed to die. It is comparatively easy to start a paper in France. It seems to be done almost without capital, and some of the

liveliest papers are those which struggle along from day to day.

Another class of journal comprises the *Figaro*, of which Robert de Flers, the playwright, is the Artistic Director, and Lucien Romier the Political Editor; and the *Gaulois*, of which, until his death, Arthur Meyer, a picturesque survivor of the Second Empire, was the owner. They appeal to the elegant world and also to the cosmopolitan society which hovers about Paris. Again there are newspapers devoted to the theatre, such as *Comœdia*; to sport, such as *L'Auto* and *L'Echo des Sports*; to finance and to politics, such as *La Cote de la Bourse* and *Le Petit Bleu*. There is *La Journée Industrielle* in which the Comité des Forges is interested, concerning itself with economic questions.

The evening newspapers are of considerable importance. There is *La Croix*, a Catholic organ; *L'Information*, which keeps its finger on the pulse of the money market; *La Liberté*, which boasts of being reactionary; *Paris-Midi*, which is published at midday and gives a résumé of the leading articles of the morning papers; *La Presse*, one of the oldest journals, which has lost its former popularity; *Bonsoir*, which gives news of the theatre; *Paris-Soir*, a new-comer, which has placed itself in the centre of the stage and is one of the most readable of the evening publications. But it is *L'Intransigéant* which easily keeps its place as the foremost evening newspaper of the popular kind. Well made it is, giving the facts about politics briefly and clearly, gathering up the news of the day in a skilful selection, full of entertaining "echoes" and literary notes, with a variety of special articles and with a pungent leaderette by Léon Bailby, perhaps the most efficient editor in Paris.

Le Temps and the *Journal des Débats* are the serious evening papers. *Le Temps* is solid in appearance and is indeed somewhat heavy, but it is well informed and often makes itself a mouthpiece of the Quai d'Orsay. It corresponds to the London *Times*, though it does not resemble it closely in outward appear-

ance. Its articles on literature by Paul Souday are a constant joy, and Pierre Brisson deals, in admirable feuilletons, with the theatre. Its musical and its art critics are among the best in the whole French Press. The *Débats* is lighter in texture, but is an earnest follower of international events. Auguste Gauvain, its principal diplomatic writer, is the most respected figure in French journalism. Both these papers will devote whole pages to the account of receptions at the Académie Française in accordance with an old tradition. Their readers belong to the official, University, and military circles, where governmental opinion is chiefly created. They are essentially Conservative.

There is a number of newspapers published in the English language. There is a Paris edition of the *Daily Mail*, edited by Mr. W. L. Warden, and of the *New York Herald Tribune*, edited by Mr. Lawrence Hills. The *Chicago Tribune* also publishes a Paris edition. In the evening the *Paris Times* makes its appearance. All these journals are capitally produced, and with their wealth of cable news are freely drawn upon by their French contemporaries. They do not resemble the French papers, but are truly British and American papers printed in Paris. There exists also a number of other newspapers in foreign languages, notably in Russian.

*

The provincial papers cannot be forgotten in any survey of the French Press. Although the Paris papers have a large circulation in the provinces, each region has its own sheet and some of them have great influence. They are published much earlier than the Paris papers can reach the remote districts. Their news service is well organized and besides general information they contain accounts of local events. Their political articles make indispensable reading for the student of affairs. These papers certainly help the movement towards decentralization. Nevertheless, in spite of the Regionalism that is thus fostered, the provinces buy the Paris papers because they reflect the life and the

spirit of Paris which have a fascination for the whole of France. The principal Regional journals are:

At Lyons: *Le Progrès*, *Le Lyon Républicain*, *Le Nouvelliste*, *L'Express*, *La Dépêche*.

At Marseilles: *Le Petit Marseillais*, *Le Petit Provençal*, *Le Soleil de Midi*.

At Bordeaux: *La Petite Gironde*, *Le Nouvelliste*, *La France du Sud-Ouest*.

At Lille: *Le Grand Echo du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais*, *La Dépêche*, *Le Progrès du Nord*, *Le Réveil du Nord*.

At Toulouse: *La Dépêche*, *Le Télégramme*.

At Montpellier: *Le Petit Méridional*, *L'Eclair*.

At Nantes: *La Phare de la Loire*, *Le Populaire*.

At Rennes: *L'Ouest Eclair*.

At Nevers: *Paris Centre*.

Some departmental journals, such as *Le Salut Public* at Lyons, *Le Journal de Rouen*, *L'Eclaireur de Nice*, *Le Petit Niçois*, are also important. All these journals devote a good deal more space to advertising than their Paris confrères, for in the country it is necessary to reach the purchasing public through the medium of the newspaper.

As for the weekly publications, they are of all shapes and sizes. The book world is well served by *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*. *L'Illustration* is the foremost illustrated weekly, and is indispensable to those who follow the development of thought in France. Its special articles are for their informative quality unsurpassed. There are numerous gossipy "hebdomadaires" of the type of *Aux Ecoutes* which, although lightly and brightly written, are often instructive. There is *L'Europe Nouvelle*, a review of politics and of art which is unequalled in the world. Under the able direction of Louise Weiss, it publishes in every issue the complete text of an important diplomatic document. Readers would probably not forgive me if I did not mention in passing *La Vie Parisienne* and such satirical organs as *Le Rire*

and *Fantasio*. I see nothing, however, which for mordant humour and clever drawings can compare with the old pre-war *Assiette au Beurre*. Nor do I see anything which compares with the old *Gil Blas* in which Steinlen's best work was produced, besides the tales of Guy de Maupassant and of the finest story-tellers of the epoch. *Gil Blas* cost only one sou, and was surely the most remarkable production at the price which has ever existed.

The monthlies, if one may be permitted a bull, are mostly produced fortnightly. There is the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, edited by René Doumic, which, although old-fashioned and conservative, remarkably retains its high standard. There is the *Revue de Paris*, under the direction of André Chaumeix, which has published in serial form much of the best post-War literature. There is the *Revue de France*, edited by Marcel Prévost, which strikes a new note. One is never tired of the *Mercure de France*, which covers, in a series of "chroniques," the whole field of French intellectual activity. In some rivalry to it there was founded a few years ago *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (monthly), which groups together a school of distinguished writers who are enriching French literature.

Before the War there was a veritable swarm of little reviews which helped forward this or that artistic or literary movement. The War made an end of them, but now they are beginning to spring up again and their name is legion. It would be invidious to attempt to make a selection, and besides they are often short-lived though vigorous while they exist, and die only to be born again under a new name. They are in some respects the most interesting of all the French publications. They show what the youth of France is doing and thinking, and if they are usually amateurish, they have the root of the matter in them. It is to be noted that while before the War they were usually, in spite of their audacities in art matters, somewhat conservative in their outlook on life, they are since the War less audacious in their

views on art (though there are exceptions) and more radical in their philosophy of life. The young men who have passed through a fiery furnace, and their cadets who were not old enough to serve in the army, have been chastened and are more serious in their art, and are more daring in their conceptions of a new world.

There are many fine spirits in the French Press. In spite of all criticism, the Press is a power to be reckoned with. Journalism is often a ladder on which Frenchmen of talent climb to high places. *Le journalisme mène à tout – à condition d'en sortir.* The successful politician in France has usually been a journalist, and may become a journalist again. The journal is a wonderful weapon. It is also, as employed in France, an exceptional means of self-advertisement. The French seem naturally to write well, they write better than they speak; and it is sometimes disconcerting to the Anglo-Saxon mind which prefers poor extempore oratory to the best written eloquence, to discover what proportion of speeches by famous politicians are made not impromptu but carefully written and read. Perhaps in these days even the Englishman and the American have discovered that they can write as well as the professional writers, but in France the Frenchman long ago discovered that he could write forcibly and with some artistry. It is therefore not surprising that the statesman is a journalist and that the journalist is a statesman. The statesman who attains real eminence in France without constant use of the Press as his platform is the exception. Moreover, there is no sharp division between journalism and literature. Authors are journalists and journalists are authors. The French Press has many faults, but on the whole it is more alive and alert, crisper and cleverer, than the Press of any other country in the world.

Chapter 10

THE LITERARY FERMENT

Of the making of books in France there is no end. But France, unlike some other countries – notably England – is a book-buying as distinguished from a book-borrowing country. The sales of French books are extraordinarily high. Every season there are a number of books whose sales run over the hundred thousand, and those which top the fifty thousand mark are fairly common. Books remain cheap in France. Before the War the ordinary price was 3.50 frs., it is now 7.50 frs. When one considers that the franc has fallen to between a third and a fourth of its former value, it will be appreciated that the price of books has not increased in proportion. Already before the War books were astonishingly cheap. Now a book which is sold in France for 7.50 frs. would be sold in England for 10*s*., and in America for $2. Moreover, there are many cheap editions running from 1 fr. to 2.50 frs. – books beautifully printed on good paper and often illustrated. It is true that they are bound in paper covers, but this is not reckoned a disadvantage in France.

The library system is by no means as efficient in France as it is in England and America, and perhaps this is an excellent thing for the book trade. The municipal libraries are uncomfortable and unattractive, and are designed to present opportunities for study rather than for recreation. The lending libraries in the villages are hopelessly out of date. The Bibliothèque Nationale is, on the other hand, the richest library in the world. It contains over 3,000,000 printed volumes, besides half a million maps and plans, 45,000 French manuscripts, 22,000 Latin manuscripts and 5,000 Greek manuscripts. There are besides a million prints and hundreds of thousands of medals and other carefully guarded relics. The Bibliothèque Nationale is continually being added to, since all publishers are obliged to send to the library two copies of every work they

295383

issue. The student is given the greatest possible assistance, but it was only five years after the War that for the first time a system of lighting was adopted and an attempt made to improve the conditions in which the student might consult the contents of the National Library. There are other great libraries – that of the Ville de Paris, with its 400,000 books; that of the Arsenal with its 600,000 volumes; that of the Mazarine with 250,000. Sainte-Geneviève has 350,000. The Senate and the Chamber have records which run into hundreds of thousands of volumes, while the Government departments are also well supplied. The University has over a million books.

It remains true that books are produced and sold in staggering numbers. Since 1919 there has been a commercialization of literature which is frequently deplored. There may be two opinions about the methods which the more enterprising publishers have recently adopted to launch their wares. The literary world is shocked, but the individual authors profit by the clamour which the publishers always contrive to raise about a promising work. They are not over-scrupulous; a scandal is as good a method as any other form of advertisement. Then, too, the system of awarding prizes is open to many objections. It has been carried to an excessive point in France, for nine out of ten of the younger authors deliberately write with one eye on the jury which may crown their volume.

The crowning of a volume by the Académie Française or the Académie Goncourt, or by "Femina," is conspicuously reported in all the newspapers. The book with a band around it shrieking its fortunate fate is piled up in the windows of every bookshop. The sales may be increased from ten to a hundred fold. The monetary value of the prizes is small, but if an author who might otherwise be almost unheard of secures a prize he is "made." No wonder that there is tremendous intrigue, no wonder that certain publishing houses adopt various devices to secure the award which means a great publishing success.

Sometimes the choice is happy enough, though always books of at least equal merit are overlooked; but sometimes the choice is astonishingly bad. A little while ago it was discovered that a rich amateur writer had, in another name, put up the money for a literary prize, had selected his own jury, and had been given the suffrages of that jury for his own obscure novel which was of little merit. Originally there might have been a good deal to say for the selection of laureates, but carried to the extremes to which it has gone since the War, one may properly doubt whether the system is in the best interests of French literature. Those who are worthy would probably have come to the front in any event without the frightful competition in big drum beating that now proceeds in Paris. To judge by the noise that is made, one would suppose that a fresh masterpiece issues from the press every week. In the end, a large number of indifferent works are foisted on the public at the expense of the quieter men of real talent. *Réclame* has become almost everything – it is at any rate nine parts of book-making. In the long run the system must defeat itself and must topple down like a house of cards. The French public has been patient and gullible, but it is growing restive.

It is the more to the credit of the younger men who fought in the War and only began to express themselves seriously after the War that they should in these circumstances display such vitality. It may be doubted whether there has ever been such a proliferation of good work. There are many admirable new writers and generally a high standard is set. If they do not always reach their ideals they work with a purpose and with exceptional intelligence.

*

There is every sign that following the War a great literary epoch has opened in France. There has been a controversy as to whether great emotional upheavals which wars necessarily produce, result in a literary renaissance. After the defeat and

humiliation of 1870 it was easy to trace the effect of the war on the younger generation. On the whole the tendency was morbid, though it is true that some of the symptoms of what was called the *mal du siècle* were to be observed before 1870. If realism had an earlier origin, its more disputable features became apparent with the depression that followed the war. But there was only a temporary check to the expansion of spirit. Presently France recovered. After all, the 187–10 war was a mere episode which could hardly be expected to bring about many changes in French life. The war of 1914–18 was on an altogether different scale, and it would be surprising if the bitter experiences, the wholesale slaughter, the prolonged submergence of safe orderly civilization, of peaceful banal days, were not to make themselves manifest in the writings of those who suffered and rejoiced, were grieved and were exhilarated. Any revaluation of French literature after the War will show that there is an efflorescence and that a host of men whose names were altogether unknown a few years ago are now writing books which, whether of enduring quality or not, are at least stimulating and betoken the stirring of a living spirit.

Apart from the men whose reputation was established before the War, who were so to speak finally formed so that even the War could not change them, there are no fewer than three classes of writers in France. There are, first, those who were quietly and unhastingly pursuing a literary career before the War, and whose life was cut suddenly in 1914, to be resumed, after a dreadful interlude, in 1919. These, who may be described as the older of the younger men, come under a double set of influences. Then there are, second, the men who had not written before the War, who after serving in the armies chose their profession. Some of them have made astonishingly swift progress. Third, there is an amazing group of exceedingly young men who know nothing of pre-war days, who were hardly touched by the War days, and who come without baggage into the feverish atmo-

sphere of the post-War days. If the two senior classes are inclined to be over serious, the junior class is precocious, frivolous and clever. In literature, as in the theatre, the very young man who is glib and is a strange combination of *naïveté* and sophistication, has arrived. He does not resemble his solemn elders, he mocks at everything, is cynical and is smart. He has managed to catch the ear of the public. The new young man of letters in France is a phenomenon of the after-War. Thus there are varying ideals and varying styles.

Georges Duhamel may be taken to represent the older classes, but he consciously seeks to renew French literature and has perhaps expressed one side of this change better than anybody. "We are," he says, "entering a great epoch. In every domain, in every *genre*, the artist begins to obey the same interior will. The Romantic period was thus a great period precisely because it had a literature, a poetry, a music, a painting, a philosophy and a criticism – all of them romantic. I believe that a new spirit guides those who strive to give their thoughts to the world. We shall all be submitted to the same influence. I hope, I believe, that a greater part will be given to the soul in letters and in the arts. To Romanticism succeeded (passing over the Parnassian movement whose effective action was negligible) Naturalism and Symbolism. Symbolism enriched us with rhythms and with timbre and, reacting against the unhealthy precision of Naturalism, took refuge in obscurity. It was a maladroit reaction, but it was necessary. Nothing is useless in art, everything in its place contributes to the slow general evolution. Naturalism had to be fought: it brought us nearer to realities, and that is its imperishable title to glory. But it went too far in its disdain for all that it did not believe to be real. Nothing was real for it which was not tangible. There is nothing in Zola or Maupassant which has relation to the soul because of their fear of writing a word which did not represent visible reality. Now we can profit by their Naturalism and also by Symbolism. Let us

accept the verbal enrichment of the one and the great idea of the other, which is to work only in the truth, but let us also rid ourselves of errors. Obscurity in art can have no other value than that of a protest. The study of the truth cannot be limited to exterior realities. Let us think of the soul, which is perhaps the only reality." He proposes therefore for himself and for the post-War writers this formula: *L'étude du vrai mais en fonction de l'âme.*

Whatever fails to throw light on the human soul – to adopt Duhamel's phrase – has no legitimate place in a narrative. Intimate knowledge cannot be replaced by documentation. It is life which is the subject of the new French School, and descriptions and incidents and the rest are admitted only on condition that they throw light on the central subject. In the catastrophic tumult of the War it was permissible to believe that nothing was certain, but Duhamel, like many others, realized that one thing was certain: that the man facing him suffered. Two and two perhaps do not make four, but the man upon whom one looks suffers – that is a certainty. There is a note of sympathy, of pity, in a great deal that is now being written – an endeavour to discover the secret of this suffering. I believe that it will hereafter appear plainly that Duhamel has discovered the exact formula.

But the third class, which has obtained a precocious success, has not yet found its way. In spite of an apparent assurance, it is in disorder. It does not know in what direction to proceed. The Dadaist Movement which troubled France from 1919 to 1922, was a manifestation of the disturbed spirits of *les jeunes*. The Dadaists raged against everything, they were moved by the impulse of destruction. But even this impulse betrayed their desire to find a base, to discover directives.

*

The Académie Française, founded by Richelieu in 1635, is still regarded abroad as the official temple of French literature, but

in point of fact, many of its members have few pretensions to literary ability, and it is not there that one can best study the living movements of French thought. The Institut de France, of which it forms part, comprises five academies: there is l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres; l'Académie des Sciences; l'Académie des Beaux Arts; l'Académie des Sciences, Morales et Politiques. Distinguished men of all kinds are thus brought together. The fifth, the Académie Française, has for chief object "the firm establishment of the rules of language." It is "to make French not only elegant but capable of dealing with all arts and sciences." The number of members was limited to forty, and the forty "immortals" work at the Dictionary perpetually. But the Académie has in its ranks not only writers but soldiers, bishops, scientists, men of social rank and many politicians. Such writers as are elected are often men whose life's work is practically finished, or men who have been engaged in more or less officially encouraged tasks. They are, as the French say, *bien pensant*. When an Anatole France is included in the company, he ostentatiously stays away from its ceremonies. The Académie is correct rather than inspired. It is a Salon, a National Conservatory of good manners and good speech. It is naturally one of the pillars of Conservatism. Many of the eminent writers of France have never been elected to the Académie, while men who have governed a colony for a few years, hastily gather together their speeches and have them printed as a passport to the Académie. The brothers de Goncourt founded another Académie which bears their name, whose purpose should be purely literary, but it must be confessed that although Daudet and Zola originally belonged to it, the majority of its members have been entirely negligible. Doubtless Académies are dignified bodies which add to the prestige of France, but in the nature of things they must be official and without any real influence on the literature of the country.

Among the members who are really writing men is Paul

Bourget, who has published a series of psychological novels, some of them of high quality. He remains faithful to his method of analysis. He poses problems which he endeavours at great length to solve. Perhaps his work appears to be a little old-fashioned, but a good deal of it will be read for many years to come. René Bazin, also an Academician, describes the various French provinces. He is not concerned with problems but with the poetic aspect of things. He usually strikes a moral note. Henri Bordeaux is more dramatic but is equally interested in the conventional virtues and verities. As for René Boylesve, his charming novels reconcile poetry and psychology. Marcel Prévost is, like most of the "immortals," a moralist. He obtains great success as the critic of feminine manners. Under the cupola sits Henri de Régnier, an admirable writer both in prose and in verse. As a poet he is regarded as a disciple of Stéphane Mallarmé, but he is clearer and more vivid. If he remains interested in the patient chiselling of words, he does not forget that it is essential that the words should become alive. Joseph Bédier has given a new form and grace to such old tales as that of Tristan and Isolde. Jean Richepin, who began his literary life in prison, ends it at the Académie. In his *Chansons des Gueux* he was the poetic champion of tramps and vagabonds. He has always protested against social and intellectual restraints. He has loved slang, gipsies, folk of the fair, strong emotions and the picturesqueness of low life. Edouard Estaunié has recently joined the illustrious company – a novelist of true distinction. There are admirable historians and religious writers, but for the rest the Academicians are marshals, politicians, amateurs of letters, philosophers, priests, diplomatists and lawyers.

*

Since the recent deaths of Anatole France, Maurice Barrès and Pierre Loti, the Académie cannot claim to have any really first-rank writers. These three disappeared in a single year. They were undoubtedly the greatest French writers of our

generation, and it is interesting therefore to inquire how far they have affected the younger men. Of Anatole France it may be said emphatically that he is rejected as a guide and as a master by the post-War writers. They are indifferent towards him when they are not actually disdainful. Frédéric Lefèvre, in an excellent series of interviews with fifty or more writers, discussed various aspects of modern French literature, and his volumes form an invaluable indication of what is thought and said in the literary world. Anatole France was scarcely mentioned on any occasion and in any connection by the younger men. It may be taken that his influence is null.

It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast between the polished style of Anatole France, his classic perfection of phrase, his quiet tone, his gentle irony, the leisureliness with which he appeared to work, and the restless brilliancy of writers like Paul Morand, Henry de Montherlant and Jean Giraudoux. Morand is a modern of the moderns. He is a cosmopolitan who flashes from Constantinople to Rome, and from Rome to London on the same page. He tortures epigrams and sacrifices everything to liveliness. His work deserved the vogue which it enjoyed but it deliberately aims at striking what may be a passing fancy. Montherlant is also an author who is up to date – a young man devoted to sport. A spirit of enterprise and of action sparkles from all his pages. As for Giraudoux, he is a true artist who nevertheless is impatient and too facile. He has taught the others their business. This school revels in paradox and a smartness that is sometimes disconcerting. If one places the productions of these and other men beside the careful form, the measured scepticism, the delightful irony of France, one will see that there is a great gulf between the last of the classics and the first of the moderns.

Maurice Barrès, though he has few followers, is not without affinities with the younger generation. His concentration, which often results in obscurity, may perhaps be found even in the

concentrated witticisms of Jean Cocteau and of Max Jacob. But the mental attitude is altogether different. There is none of the delicacy of Barrès, there is none of his romanticism, for Barrès was after all a Romantic. His cult of the ego is to be traced in the newer work, but, on the other hand, Barrès had moral roots, political convictions, religious beliefs that the more advanced men of to-day seem incapable of acquiring. In short, one perceives in the Philippe Soupaults, the René Benjamins, the Raymond Radiguets (a promising writer who died when he was little more than twenty years of age), something of the artistic talent but nothing of the mental texture of Barrès.

Pierre Loti with his inimitable sense of colour, his nostalgia, his love of exoticism, must stand a solitary figure, but there are a number of writers who at any rate find their inspiration in far-off countries. If no one can reproduce his intensity and the peculiar quality of his imaginative power, he has yet induced French writers to look to other lands, picturesque and colourful, for their inspiration. The brothers Jérôme and Jean Tharaud have worked well in this field. So has Myriam Harry. Claude Farrère is in some respects his successor. Pierre Benoit, though he excels as a constructor of plots, a teller of tales – in which Pierre Loti had little skill – has at least followed Loti in searching for effects under different skies. It would be wrong to compare Valery Larbaud, with his *Monologue Intérieur*, with Pierre Loti except that he, too, wanders outside the frontiers of France. There are many others who could be cited, belonging to vastly varying schools, who have this in common with Loti that they have wandered afield in their search for new sensations.

French literature since the War has had to mourn the death of Marcel Proust. Proust has won many ardent admirers in England and America as well as in France. It is perhaps too early to determine whether his work is not too ponderous and involved to endure. But that his minute analysis of feelings and his

detailed descriptions of characters have had and will continue to have a great influence, can hardly be doubted.

Among the older men is Georges Courteline, whose stories of military life and of Government offices rank him, in the opinion of good critics, among the greatest humorists now alive. Pierre Louys, in his fleshly, erotic way, has composed scenes of great beauty. Abel Hermant and Pierre Mille are veterans of the press and of literature, productive, conscientious, interesting and workmanlike. One of the best writers of short stories, a number of which have been converted into plays, is Henri Duvernois. The *propos* of Alain are full of wit and wisdom. Léon Daudet, the son of Alphonse Daudet, with all his truculence, has given us many unforgettable portraits in the series of books which constitute his Memoirs. His stories one cannot praise so highly, though in parts they are good. The two Rosnys cannot be omitted even from a list which, in the nature of things, cannot pretend to be complete. Although Charles Maurras has consecrated his talents to daily polemical journalism, he is a true philosopher and his sentences are models of clarity and balance. Romain Rolland has contributed in *Jean Christophe* and in *Colas Breugnon* notable works to the French language. Victor Margueritte obtained a *succès de scandale* when he wrote a fictional account of certain aspects of after-War life, but for many years he has been publishing sounder though less successful novels. Gyp (the Comtesse de Mirabeau Martel), once the most prolific of women novelists, is followed in the same field by Rachilde (of the *Mercure de France*), Lucie Delarue Mardrus and the delightful Colette, undoubtedly a woman of genius.

Among the best of the critics are Jean Carrère, Henri Massis, Paul Souday of the *Temps*, Albert Thibaudet, Fernand Vandérem, and Henri Bidou. André Gide is the recognized chief of a school of writers who do not endeavour to reach a large public, who are indeed somewhat precious, but who are greatly admired by a select audience. The review and the publishing house

known as the Nouvelle Revue Française are the medium through which this group comes into contact with its public. It arouses the greatest hostility in a rival group led by Henri Béraud, himself a vigorous novelist and a still more vigorous polemist. Its adherents are accused of studied dryness and dullness, denounced as deficient in the fierce vitality that should, in the opinion of Béraud, mark the men who have emerged from the Great War. Another ground of quarrel which Béraud has chosen against the Gidists is their depreciation of the journalist authors. Béraud claims that it is wrong to endeavour to draw distinctions between the writer for the newspaper and the writer who confines himself to the literary magazines and to book form. He even claims that nobody can possess virility and vividness and knowledge who is not accustomed to the exigencies of the daily task. In support of his contention he has edited a series of *grands reportages*. The most notable work in this series is that of Albert Londres who inquired into the terrible conditions in the French Penal Settlements. The subject offered a magnificent opportunity to Londres, and he treated it in a masterly manner.

*

Béraud stands for health and sanity, and it is of great interest to note that a growing number of French authors stand above all for health and sanity and try to get away from literature as such to approach nearer to humanity. Among them should be mentioned Pierre MacOrlan, Pierre Hamp, the chronicler of toil, André Maurois, who created the delicious "Colonel Bramble" and wrote the Life of Shelley in the form of a novel, Henri Pourrat who remains in his native Auvergne far from the quarrels of the literary chapels, and Roland Dorgelès. Dorgelès has made a declaration which would be the declaration of a dozen of the newer authors. "We are against anything which does not make for moral health. We want tonics. We dislike the Immoralists. Words are vain if they do not help to render life better. My

ambition is to be the lyrical witness of my epoch, to express its pains, its remorse, its hopes." It will be seen that this declaration is in essential conformity with that of Duhamel, and while there must always be literary chapels, precious writers and experimenters in eccentricity, I believe it true that the predominant feature of the post-War literature of France is this spirit of pity and of service and of profound humanity.

These qualities are to be found in Henri Barbusse who has written three books which will long endure. Francis Carco displays the same qualities, though there is a sense of restraint in everything he produces. Roger Martin du Gard has undertaken the vast task of tracing the history of a French family, and his art becomes better as each successive volume emerges from the press. François Mauriac definitely identifies himself with Catholicism. Alphonse de Chateaubriand is typical of authors who choose a locality which they know well for the scene of their narrative and who are helping to revive the regional consciousness.

In poetry there are, apart from those to whom incidental reference has been made, several noteworthy writers but scarcely, in my opinion, any new notations. Paul Claudel has given us mystical poetic plays of a symbolism that is not always easy to follow. It is by images that he expresses his thoughts which are too complex, or too grand to be expressed directly. He writes in versets of a Biblical rhythm, and his language is somewhat archaic and artificial. Paul Valéry has not produced much, but his slim volumes are exquisitely wrought. He would disclaim the influence of Mallarmé, but his work is refined by the intellect into sheer abstraction. Francis Jammes is simple and even naïve, evoking the perfumes of the country, the purity of birds and flowers and *jeunes filles*, and the intimate poesy of simple interiors. The Comtesse Mathieu de Noailles, half Greek, half Roumanian in origin but nevertheless Parisian, is ardent and romantic. She has an acute sensibility and a voluptuous

musicality. Depth of emotion is allied to perfection of form. Paul Fort is always graceful and spontaneous, singing the elemental things. He is by far the most prolific of French poets, and his Ballades, which may be sung and danced, have all the elements of popularity. He is the true troubadour of our age and deserves to be much better known abroad than he is. Madame Gérard d'Houville often finds charming accents. Maurice Rostand, the son of Edmond Rostand, though chiefly writing in the form of drama, is the most forcible of the Romantic poets.

Such is the summary tableau of present-day French literature and the future is not without promise. A great critic has written, "May we look for a new literature, young and magnificent? We cannot doubt it. It must unfold itself. But we must have the patience to wait. The Armistice was only yesterday. We have hardly begun to enjoy the fruits of peace. After 1815 we waited until 1820 for the Meditations, until 1822 for the first volumes of Victor Hugo and of Alfred de Vigny, until 1825 and even 1830 for the blossoming of Romanticism. We must have confidence. Already, as in the days of François Premier, the conditions of a Renaissance appear to present themselves. . . . Our literature in the Twentieth Century was a study and analysis of passions, particularly that of love. A social and political state of affairs which afforded plenty of leisure, which rarely called for any real sacrifice, created an artificial well-being. To-day the preoccupations of men are different. They are interested in fundamental things. They are interested in what is primitive, in the daily reality, and in the domain of thought and feeling. The new movement reveals itself to the observer who day by day follows the literary production. As they are concerned with new subjects, our young writers, who have neither rules nor models for the form and the style, often go astray, are often subtle, obscure and disconcerting. But when one refuses to be discouraged by the difficulties of approach one perceives that they

are dealing with great subjects. Most of them are conscious of being the artisans of a society in which reason, justice, and the desire for peace will unite the nations, reconciled in bonds of fraternity."

Chapter II

AT THE THEATRE

IT is generally agreed that there has been, since the War, a theatrical crisis in France. But then there has always been such a crisis. One has heard of the decadence of the theatre as long as one can remember. There are to-day as many good, workmanlike writers for the stage as there ever were, and in addition there is a stirring among the young men, who are endeavouring to break away from the boulevard traditions. Those boulevard traditions are outworn regarded from the artistic point of view, and one wonders how the public can tolerate year after year what appears to be the same play with the same plot produced in at least a dozen theatres. The majority of plays in any country, at any given moment, are frankly banal, and in France the theatrical conventions that have been set up are followed more closely than in England or America. In one form or another we have the eternal triangle. There is but one subject in the ordinary commercial theatre: the dramatist may be better or worse, the wit may be more or less sparkling, the pathos may be more or less poignant, but the groundwork of ninety-nine out of a hundred plays in France is precisely the same. It is for this reason that one distinguished British critic has condemned, root and branch, the French theatre of to-day. But what did he then expect? What proportion of really notable plays can be found in any country? It is surely obvious enough that the majority of entertainments presented to the public must be modelled on a set pattern. It is not by these entertainments that one must judge, but by the four or five exceptional managers, the four or five exceptional play-houses, the four or five exceptional playwrights.

For a long period I was an assiduous first-nighter in France: I missed few of the notable *répétitions générales*. Generally I experienced a sense of disappointment and the most amusing part of the spectacle was the contemplation of the special audience

composed of *tout Paris*. It is easy to grow blasé and never to expect to see anything worth while, but nevertheless every now and again there was produced something really remarkable, and if two or three times in a season there is a play which stands out above the dead level of mediocrity it may properly be held that the theatre remains alive. One can admit, therefore, that for the most part French plays show little originality, that the mounting is on the whole poorer than at home, and that most French actors and actresses have tricks of declamation that are not always to be preferred to the general woodenness of the acting in England; and yet believe that the French Theatre is as interesting as it has ever been, lit up by vivid exceptional efforts.

Since the War there have been economic difficulties which have rendered difficult the adequate production of spectacles, above all by the travelling companies in the provinces. The general expenses have increased enormously, and it has been impossible to raise the price of places to the same extent. A stall in a Paris theatre to-day ranges from 15 frs. to 35 frs., and it is hard to put it higher. Even at 35 frs. one is paying, as I write, only 7*s*., or a dollar and a half. In addition, the taxes for the *assistance publique* and other purposes are extremely heavy. It must also be remembered that although there are large theatres in Paris, there are also many exceedingly small ones. The bandbox theatre may be regarded as more typical of Paris than the immense theatre. Actors are by no means so well paid as elsewhere. There are, it would seem, too many entertainments, too much competition, and this makes not for a raising of the standard but, curiously enough, for a lowering of the standard. Stars are created for all kinds of reasons; talent does not always count. The *coulisses* of the theatre are full of intrigue; managers are often obliged to obey wealthy patrons. The whole business of exploiting a theatre has become more and more commercial. It is not advisable to take risks; the established favourites are appealed to constantly, and these authors turn out their plays

on the most approved lines of American mass production. All this must be granted, but it does not follow that here and there is not to be found a drama which is vastly superior to the ruck.

*

But most encouraging sign of all: from this hurly-burly of the commercial theatre there emerges an entirely different movement. There emerges the anti-commercial movement of artistic enthusiasts. Nobody can appreciate the French theatre who has not followed with great attention the numerous attempts to break away from all that is conventional and that is mercenary. From the time that M. Antoine founded the Théâtre Libre and tried to infuse fresh life into the dramatic world, there has been a constant succession of young men – some of them now ageing – who have tried to separate themselves from the mechanical enterprises of the business men. Only, however, during the past few years has the separation between the *théâtre d'avant-garde* and the *théâtre des boulevards* been complete. Now it is possible to draw a definite line of demarcation between the two sorts of theatres. They are directly antithetical. There is scarcely any comparison possible between the work of Le Vieux Colombier under Jacques Copeau, and the Théâtre de Montmartre of Charles Dullin, and the work of the Gymnase and the Vaudeville.

The whole spirit is different. The boulevard theatre moves along well recognized lines and takes care not to make any serious experiments. The artistic theatre perpetually strives to escape from tradition. In spite of heroic attempts, it is rarely that the artistic theatre can maintain itself for any long period and become prosperous. Even the Vieux Colombier, the best known of the *théâtres d'avant-garde*, found itself unable to continue the combat. Jacques Copeau intends, after a short rest, to begin again. But even though these theatres are momentarily extinguished, they are always revived in another form. They are the salt of the theatrical world; they leaven the whole dead lump.

Their influence is often altogether disproportionate to their success; they not only stand for progress but, however slowly, determine a general progress, and they must always be taken into account when the place of the French drama is considered. It must not be supposed that one can unreservedly praise these *théâtres d'art*: they tend to become little chapels. They begin ardently enough, but afterwards they represent a little group which has lost its initial energy and become more and more closed to outward things. All their plays begin to resemble each other: we have another school. It is then time to break the windows and let in some fresh air.

How are these theatres to keep their original vigour? Difficulties beset them on every side. If they do not develop definite preferences they are meaningless, but if they lock themselves in watertight compartments of particular preferences then they are equally meaningless. Nor is it easy to recruit a homogeneous troupe. French actors are taught a style of acting which is regarded by practically all these independent theatres as intolerable. It is too declamatory, it is full of attitudes; at its worst it is sheer barn-storming, fustian ranting; at its best it is admirable because so well regulated. But it cannot be said to be natural, and the aim of most of the *théâtres d'avant-garde* is to be natural, to be quiet, to be free, exempt of facile effects. Therefore the Vieux Colombier and the Atelier (the Théâtre de Montmartre) are obliged to form their own interpreters. It is a long and thankless job, and often the acting seems all wrong because some of the actors belong neither to the old nor to the new school and are still imperfectly trained. There is no room in these theatres for the vedette who wishes to distinguish himself all the time at the expense of the troupe, and when by dint of strenuous efforts, a homogeneous company is at last formed, one of the *théâtres des boulevards* will come along with propositions to the best actor of the troupe. From the point of view of theatrical art in general, this might be excellent, though unfortunate for the

smaller theatre; but it is not as a rule excellent because the actor is taken to play in a conventional piece and is expected to conform to the theatrical conventions and abandon his individual qualities.

*

Madame Pitoëff, for example, undoubtedly one of the most intelligent actresses in Europe, found herself obliged recently to accept the offer of the Porte St. Martin Theatre. She was obliged to gain her livelihood and no reproach can be levelled against her, but one has not the smallest desire to see her play in a piece in which she must either sink her talents or *détonner* in the general interpretation. It is useless for one member of a troupe to adopt a different manner from that of the rest of the troupe. When Madame Pitoëff was at the Comédie des Champs Elysées she made that theatre one of the most important in Paris. She did this partly because the pieces produced were of exceptional value – Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* was among her finest creations – but she also triumphed in indifferent pieces in which she was allowed to give of her best supported by a company which followed her lead. At the Champs Elysées her husband, M. Pitoëff – himself an excellent actor and a clever *metteur en scène* – had a four-years' contract. When it came to an end it was M. Louis Jouvet of the Vieux Colombier who became the director. He, too, is to be placed in the first rank.

This must not be taken as a general condemnation of the interpretation to be found in the boulevard theatres. On the contrary, it is, in its own way, good: that is to say, it is for the most part workmanlike, and is well adapted to the class of play produced. It contributes to the success of the most mediocre plays. The great disadvantage of the *avant-garde théâtres* is that they have not as a rule a sufficiency of material means. They have need of money and of organization. It was M. Jacques Hébertot who realized that the most ambitious theatre could not exist on

mere goodwill, and he is to be highly commended for his enterprise in founding in the beautiful cadre of the Champs Elysées Theatres establishments amply equipped in every respect.

Jacques Hébertot, who has now retired from the fray, did not, it should be added, merely foster the native drama, but welcomed every foreign company of merit, and every foreign playwright susceptible of interesting the French public. The French, in matters of the theatre, are undoubtedly insular, though the greatest credit must go to M. Lugné Poë, who, in the little theatre L'Œuvre, has for many years given the most interesting performances of Ibsen, of Bernard Shaw and of the great Scandinavian, German and Austrian playwrights.

*

The *jeunes*, who are unanimous in condemning, and even in despising the pieces of the boulevards, have hardly any precise tendencies, and are extremely vague when they are asked to formulate their dramatic ideals. There is no large movement, no common direction. One must applaud them rather for their intentions than for their achievements, but out of this anarchy there must emerge something worth while. That there is, indeed, a serious reaction against the formulas which made the success of Augier and of Dumas is in itself important and promising. Still one would like to see a clarifying of ideas. In the eighties and nineties the élite which was tired of Sardou – though Sardou is by far the most dexterous of all the modern French playwrights – was numerically larger and perhaps more animated by revolutionary ardour than the élite of to-day. The movement determined by Antoine, though prepared by the naturalist novelists, was a single movement. There was a demand for the naturalist theatre. In my opinion the greatest of all the naturalist playwrights, not accepted in his day, was Henri Becque. Forty years after it was written *Les Corbeaux* entered the Comédie Française and appears as fresh and valuable as ever. The *jeunes*, who were influenced by Becque, shared

his taste for truth in reaction against the *romantiques* and their successors. This did not prevent one of the greatest *romantiques*, M. Edmond Rostand, with his *Cyrano de Bergerac*, from triumphing.

To-day it would be difficult to generalize. There is little community of aspiration, but one discerns that the young dramatists who are concerned in writing plays which are not of merely commercial interest are united at least on one point – they are now opposed to realism in its narrowest sense. If they would copy life it is only on condition that they give the freest interpretation to what they see. There is thus an opposition between the post-War period and the period of the nineties. But each author has his own vision; he has his own interpretative poetry. The troop is not a single troop, such as that which Antoine led. In general it may be said that they refuse to believe in the virtue of doctrines, they refuse to be bound. Each of them goes his own way. They believe only in the importance of their personal originality; they work according to their individual temperaments. They are scattered, and this dispersal of energy makes it impossible to compare the new theatre of to-day with the theatre of 1830, 1850 and 1890.

It is of course true that there are associations – La Chimère, La Grimace, Le Griffon, etc. – but this fact is not in contradiction, for these associations are rather associations of players than of authors with similar views. For the most part these companies believe in a certain kind of acting, and they naturally seek for plays that do not demand any forcing of the note. But there is no central theory: the general aspiration towards more artistic writing and more artistic playing provokes the most diverse experiments. The result is that there is a perpetual process of separation and of regrouping. The little theatres, or rather the little groups, pullulate: they are united only in their fight against a certain kind of theatre. In every positive sense they are almost unrelated one with the other. In

short, it is difficult to speak of the evolution of the French theatre. There are new talents, there is a dramatic reawakening, there is a production of original work, but there is no definable and characteristic evolution. One is struck above all by the individualism of recent efforts. Jules Romains, one of the leaders among the younger dramatic authors, proclaimed himself a "unanimist." Georges Duhamel is certainly so no longer, though in a curiously mounted play of his we were shewn four or five rooms of a house at the same time, and looked upon the household rather than upon the individuals. Charles Vildrac refuses to accept this label. Jean Sarment, Jacques Natanson, and indeed most of the younger men will have nothing to do with designations.

The only general trait which marks this class of dramatist is their faith in their work and in the possibilities of renewing the dramatic art. They are profoundly against mere fine writing, that kind of literature of which Verlaine cried, "Prends moi la littérature et tords lui le cou!" In some of the boulevard theatres you will find "literature" in profusion: in the advanced theatres never. The aim is to be simple in style and evocative. The younger men are not so much analytical as synthetical in their purpose. They suggest, they discover relations, they offer their story as typical, and therefore as significant; almost one is tempted to say that they are symbolical, that they compose parables. In its extreme form perhaps the best example of the young French theatre is to be found in the "Knock" of Jules Romains. Romains sets out deliberately to elaborate a thesis. "Knock" is the enterprising doctor who finds a village in which disease is almost unknown. He promptly makes the whole village imagine it is sick by the simple device of offering consultations gratuitously. Once the habit of going to the doctor is taken, illness becomes common enough. The theme is cleverly handled.

During the past twenty years, so far as new plays are concerned, the domain of the ordinary theatre has singularly shrunk. The

historical drama, apart from the new chronicle plays of Paul Fort – which after all bear little resemblance to the old historical drama – has practically disappeared. So has the comedy of manners and the social pieces which were once so popular. Even M. Eugène Brieux, who frankly presented sermons in the form of plays, and the practitioner of the *pièce d'idées* find that their day is done. In passionate drama, Henri Bataille – who died after the War – and Henri Bernstein, remain almost isolated. They have no followers. Maurice Rostand has kept alive the romantic play in verse, and is doubtless – in spite of the overshadowing figure of his father – France's finest poet playwright, though there are others who have done excellent work in verse – Maurice Magre, André Rivoire, Paul Geraldy, Georges Rivollet, Miguel Zamacois and François Porché. For the most part the French play which succeeds is lightly confectioned, smart, amusing and risqué. The changes produced by the War on social life have not been seriously treated in the theatre. The modifications in the relation of classes, the looser morals, the flashier manners, the tragic *bouleversement*, have not inspired French authors. Henry Marx is constantly demanding a "social theatre," but himself only gives us conflicts of sentiments. It will be seen therefore that the dramatic field is poorer than it has ever been since history is ruled out and is left to the cinema which is now producing the *drame à costumes*, since the drama in verse is not found generally interesting, since the drama of ideas is not wanted by anybody, since even the passionate drama is left to a few of the older men.

*

The Comédie Française remains what it was. It respects tradition, it is not its business to progress. Its repertory is after all for the most part, in spite of constant new productions, the old repertory. It should certainly be praised for what it is. It gives the masterpieces of the French stage more perfectly than they are given elsewhere – in spite of the eccentric lessons which

Lucien Guitry, who understands nothing of Molière, has attempted to give the "Comédie." The company is as good as ever: I find no falling off whatever, though there is nobody who replaces Mounet Sully. The interpretation could not in its own way be better, the actors are extremely well trained, and there presides at the State-endowed national theatre a perfect taste for classical literature. Nobody can perhaps understand the classical French drama who has not frequented the "Comédie."

The national theatre was founded by Louis XIV in 1680, seven years after the death of Molière, by the fusion of the two main theatrical companies which were in Paris at the time. It has undergone vicissitudes, and during the Revolution it remained anti-Republican in its tendencies. Napoleon framed a precise constitution for the national theatre and signed it at Moscow in 1812. The Comédie Française is at once a theatre and a co-operative organization. The association is formed by *sociétaires*, that is to say actors who have been admitted into a kind of partnership, and who are paid on a profit-sharing basis. They receive a part of the profits, the theoretical part being divided into twelfths or *douzièmes*. The number of *douzièmes* to which the *sociétaires* are entitled vary from three to twelve. Half the sum due is paid to the *sociétaire* and the other half is retained and accumulates to form his share of the capital and to create a pension fund. Besides the *sociétaires* there are a number of salaried *pensionnaires*. They may in due course be elected *sociétaires*. It is inevitable that there should be a good deal of dispute concerning the allocation of the available *douzièmes*. When a *sociétaire* retires he not only creates a vacancy, but leaves a number of *douzièmes* for distribution; but at the same time he may take out of the theatre his capital, which may have accumulated to the large amount of 400,000 frs. Financial problems arise on such resignations. A Ministerial decree issued in 1901 may compel retirement after twenty years' service at the Comédie. Although the actors to some extent are partners,

there is an administrator-general – at the present time M. Emile Fabre – while the Minister of Public Instruction and of Fine Arts retains in his hands the supreme control.

The Odéon, regarded as the second French theatre, is also aided by the State. It is now under the direction of M. Firmin Gémier, who is not only one of France's best actors, but has ideals for the theatre which he has always endeavoured to realize. Besides managing the Odéon, he created a national popular theatre. He believes not, as do most of the younger men, in making the theatre rather precious, but in making it the great diversion of the people. It should provide popular festivities interesting not one class but all classes. It should have its roots in the sentiments and traditions of the nation. He believes that the very construction of the present-day theatres is all wrong. He objects to the galleries, which imply the separation of rich and poor: he would have great arenas. The kind of play which he wants should express in a large manner the aspirations of the people, and should draw as big a crowd as baseball or football or cycling. Indeed he would provide a large place for sports in the great popular festivities which he plans. All this may appear to be a somewhat idle ambition, but in so far as it is possible to carry out his views, he has done something to renovate the French theatre. His greatest difficulty is that he can find few plays which are broadly human enough for the masses. Beyond Shakespeare and Molière, the ancient Greeks and the Spanish dramatists, he finds in the dramatic repertory of the world practically nothing which truly corresponds to his ideas. He has tried, with the collaboration of Saint-Georges de Bouhélier, to give popular versions which would be more readily understood of *Œdipus* and other Greek plays. Whatever Gémier actually accomplishes or fails to accomplish, he is unquestionably one of the vivifying forces of the modern French theatre.

Although François de Curel had his greatest success many years ago, he is still regarded by many people as at the head of

the French dramatists. His psychology, which was new and striking at one time, seems now to be somewhat old-fashioned, Henri Lavedan, who writes little now, is light and charming. De Max, one of the most gifted if erratic players at the Comédie Française, whose premature death is a heavy loss to the theatre, was superb in the *Prince d'Aurec*. *Le Gendre de M. Poirier* has an assured place in the French repertory. Maurice Donnay with his *Lysistrata* and *Paraître*, is remarkable for his vivacity of dialogue, but he sails as near the scabrous wind as possible. Georges de Porto-Riche has been called the *Racine du Sensualisme*. He is daringly ardent, and during the past few years his reputation has been carried to even greater heights than when he wrote *Amoureuse* in 1891. Henri Bernstein, with his warm, glowing, irresistible temperament, has done much notable work. Indeed since the War his *Judith* and his *Galerie des Glaces* have been hailed as the two best pieces produced in the boulevard theatres. Henri Bataille, with his individual touch, chose not dissimilar subjects. Pierre Wolff may be said to belong to the same school, though he affects a more delicate pathos. Alfred Capus, who recently died, knew how to amuse the Parisian audiences with his sparkling and ingenious comedy based upon the philosophy that *tout s'arrange*. For sheer drollery, Tristan Bernard would be hard to beat. His pieces are superficial, but he disguises much emotion under the *comédie extérieure*. Pierre Veber is a successful Palais Royal playwright of the kind of which Georges Feydeau was the most brilliant example. As for Robert de Flers and his inevitable collaborator – now Francis de Croisset – he gives us well-made pieces of smiling optimism. Sacha Guitry had a great vogue with his facile flippancy. André de Lorde is a specialist in the Grand Guignol type of play. Yves Mirande produces light pieces in extraordinary numbers. Among the better known dramatists may be cited Alfred Savoir, Charles Méré, René Fauchois, Henri Duvernois, Kistemaeckers.

*

The young dramatists – young not necessarily in age, though for the most part they are still on the right side of forty – include Lenormand, who exploits psychoanalysis in his plays; Alexandre Arnoux; Paul Raynal, whose daring *Tombeau sous l'Arc de Triomphe*, produced at the Comédie Francaise, was a terrible exposure of the War spirit; Marcel Arnac; René Benjamin; and those who have already been mentioned. One must rank Saint-Georges de Bouhélier among the eternally young, though his *Carnaval des Enfants*, one of the most touching plays of poor life in the language, was written in 1910.

The influence of the Ballets Russes on décors has been real, but there is now a reaction against the outrance of the colours employed. Léon Bakst, who died in 1925, has done a great deal of work in France, and has affected his contemporaries more than anyone else in the theatre. The harmony of colour has become a true science, but Bakst has developed a convention against which many of the newer men are fighting. Charles Dullin, for example, endeavours to be realist. Jacques Copeau is opposed to any stage decoration that is artificial and has no definite utility. He believes that the question of stage setting is secondary. The play is the thing. He has simplified as far as possible. Even at the Comédie Française Granval is a partisan of simplification, leaving much to the imagination of the public. Lucien Jusseaume urges that the décor shall not take up too much place, but it should strike the spectator at the rising of the curtain. At the Théâtre des Arts Rodolphe Darzens declares that the public is getting tired of synthetic décors, which are adopted above all for reasons of economy. Among the best known *metteurs en scène* and decorators are Maxime Dethomas, Drésa, Bertin and Valdo Barbey; but altogether there is no clear tendency – in this respect, too, the theatre is still in a state of flux.

Any list of outstanding actors should include Albert Lambert and Alexandre, who make dignified figures in classical plays; Le

Bargy, who is inclined to force the note and to gesticulate too much; Jean Hervé, a most promising young comedian; Silvain, the doyen of the stage; Léon Bernard, who has great sensibility and bonhomie; all of these at the Comédie Française, where are also to be found Mesdames Cécile Sorel, Ventura, Segond Weber, Madeleine Roch, Berthe Bovy, Robinne, Huguette Duflos and Piérat. Outside the Comédie Française in the boulevard theatres are: Lucien Guitry, regarded by his admirers – who included Sarah Bernhardt – as the finest living actor, though to my mind he is too deliberate and seeks too much the centre of the stage; Félix Huguenet; Arquillière; Sacha Guitry; Tarride, Signoret, who has an exceedingly versatile talent; Grétillat; Yonnel, a young Roumanian not untouched by genius; André Brulé, of the handsome type; Harry Baur; Victor Boucher, who contrives to be droll without sacrificing his natural manner; Alcover; Galipaux and Michel Simon. Among the women, most people are inclined to put Madame Simone first: there are Cora Laparcerie, Gabrielle Dorziat, Suzanne Desprès, Yvonne Printemps, Vera Sergine, Madeleine Lely, Marthe Régnier, Dermoz, Eve Francis, France Ellys, Jane Marnac, Pitoëff, and a host of others, for such a list cannot of course pretend to be comprehensive. In the revues Spinelly and Mistinguett are the best-known stars.

Chapter 12

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

THAT Paris is the Art capital of the world will scarcely be disputed. Nowhere is there such a display of pictures, not only in the more or less official salons in which one tramps along miles of floor space looking dizzily at thousands of canvases, but also in the rooms of the innumerable dealers and in the very cafés which, at Montparnasse, are lined with the productions of the Paris artist. Indeed, many of the younger men are not content with these opportunities of exhibition; they have overflowed into the streets, and at the Place du Tertre at Montmartre, and around the railed-in Luxembourg Gardens may often be seen outdoor picture shows. Before the War Montmartre was the chief artistic centre, but now Montparnasse has triumphed, and it is on the left bank of the river that the artists, French and foreign, love to congregate.

It is of some importance to ascertain what is the tendency of art in Paris. The first curious remark that the observer, who has lived long and in somewhat intimate contact with the painters of Montparnasse, makes, is that the former tendency of splitting up into small schools has almost disappeared. Men – and women – are working singly. They may – and do – copy each other, but they found no new schools. Something like anarchy prevails: the individual effort has become all important. This is an exceedingly significant post-War change because although at first sight the results are not very dissimilar from the results of other days, in reality each sincere artist is endeavouring to work out his problems in his own way without reference to a *chef de file*, and without adopting the ready-made rules of a particular group. It must be confessed, however, that most of the work that has been done since the War is appallingly poor. There has been above all a conspicuous absence of *métier*. This lack of professional skill it was sought to cover up by mere eccentricity.

Unfortunately, the production of tableaux has become a busi-

ness which is not dissimilar from the business of selling certain kinds of shares: this or that dealer will, without any reference to the merits of the work of a particular painter, suddenly begin to boom the canvases he has collected and, once the movement has started, there are always plenty of critics who are prepared to carry on the game. Then the most insignificant and worthless persons will be "discovered" by England and by America; in England and in America the trick has once more been accomplished, and for a long time it will be the fashion to speak the name of the artist thus launched with respect and to discuss in a technical jargon the distorted figures, the original perspective, the nauseous greens and muddy yellows and dirty blues, the lunatic landscapes and all the latest innovations which, for a moment, are held to place their authors far above Rembrandt. Nevertheless, there are signs that this kind of thing is being found out by the public. Apparently few people know anything about painting, and they are willing to take the opinions of presumably competent persons on trust. But the market is overcrowded. The indolent and impudent manufacture of so-called masterpieces has been overdone. "This is surely the end of modern art!" cried a distinguished English painter, as he tramped with me through the interminable galleries a short time ago. Certainly nine-tenths of the work on the walls was sheer rubbish. The standard appeared to be lower than ever, but has not the average of painting always been poor? The outlook is not as gloomy as he supposes; there are still higher peaks which stand up above this welter of mediocrity. Moreover, although it may be true that in the early years of the post-War period modern art lost itself in a noisome marshland, the stream yet remains pure.

The conditions must be remembered. Five vital years had been taken out of the lives of the younger men. They had been unable to practise their art. They returned, and instead of applying themselves conscientiously to the arduous task of

making up for lost time, they endeavoured to discover short cuts to success. Slap-dash work, as long as it was a little different, was accepted by the public as almost miraculous. A revolution in art was timed to begin every other week. It was impossible in these circumstances that the younger French artists should find themselves immediately, but the evil, by its very excess, is rapidly curing itself. It is becoming harder to find a short cut to success, and, besides, serious men are beginning to revolt against the methods which were in vogue. They apply themselves sincerely; they are rapidly learning; they feel that the day of mere experimental sketches is over, and they are once more turning to the traditions and essaying to put themselves above all in possession of their *métier*.

Paradoxical as it may appear, the whole current of modern art is turning back towards Classicism. There are many men in Paris who now disdain, for a whim, a mode, an advertisement, lightly to depart from the accepted principles of painting. This does not mean that they are apeing the dead past. Their pictures could not have been painted at any other time; they smack of the present; they are alive and challenging; but they are not vamped, they are not the outcome of idleness and ignorance, they are not simply attempts to startle us with new things. There are still many who will continue to take refuge in novelty because they have not taken the trouble to pass through the necessary stages, and because they do not know enough to paint straightforwardly. But the more serious men are mastering their craft, they are not relying upon some natural gift which may indeed produce something amusing, but ultimately negligible. Augustus John once summed up the whole matter to me when he said: "An artist should either know everything about painting – or nothing at all." The choice for the younger men was to know nothing – and for a time this seemed to suffice: or to know everything – and they are undoubtedly putting forward great efforts and are going through the tedium of real study with a

genuine purpose. The fashion was for the *douanier* Rousseau, with his quaint, naïve methods like those of a child, and for the methods of the deliberately fantastic and sophisticated Paris painters. One may continue to be pleased with the simplicity of Rousseau because of its sincerity; one cannot continue to be pleased with the sophisticated shallowness of the young men in a hurry. The wheel is turning full circle.

*

The last great School was that of the Impressionists. Cubism taught us much, but Cubism was only a stage. A number of excellent men have passed through the Cubist stage and they have profited greatly, but their solid work has come after their emergence from this college. To-day there are practically no Cubists among the front-rank painters. If there are any left it is Braque, whose Cubism merely consists in laying more emphasis on masses than is usual. Picasso has long left it behind. In another category, Matisse, who has had an enormous influence on the younger men, seems to be becoming more sober and correct – in a word, in spite of his strong personality, more classic. Utrillo, in his later manner, has indeed become far too meticulous. The ill-fated Modigliani, with his elongated faces, may still charm, but he must stand alone. The Pointillistes and the Futurists and the rest have thrown up their leaders, but their leaders are not to be followed. The weird belief that crude negro art was the last word in painting and sculpture may well be left to those who desire to earn a little easy money by producing what many people with scarcely any training could produce. Those who choose to stand on their heads manage to get a crowd around them, but the joke soon becomes stale. It will soon not be considered clever to pretend that lines in perspective widen outwards instead of running together. This kind of perversion is in the end wearisome. Snobs admired and were afraid to admit that they did not understand. Now the reaction is coming quickly. Badness which depends upon its incomprehensibility

is no longer a virtue. "Fumisterie" there will doubtless always be; experiment is the life breath of art; but novelty not simply for the sake of novelty but for the sake of sensation, is nearly over. The public has had enough of ugliness, incompetence, imbecility, and even the snobs are plucking up courage. In short, the whole current of art is turning.

One of the ablest French critics, M. Camille Mauclair, has written the definitive condemnation of the false theories which have abounded since the great days of Impressionism. "The tendency has been to liberate more and more painting from the necessity of any direct representation of nature. Interpretation has been limited by no vision, but has been according to the fancy of each individual. This conception has sometimes produced a geometrical synthesis which destroys the infinite variety of natural forms. Pictural charm has been ignored. The consequence has been dryness of line and Cubistic notations. From Cubism, however, which taught us much about masses, it is possible to start again in a search for significant detail and impressive charm." He asserts that all the modern technical tendencies have ended in the elimination of psychological meaning that was to be found in the Primitives, in Rembrandt and in Holbein. The painters of portraits are not principally "occupied with the soul." Their tableaux are as much "still lifes" when they deal with persons as when they deal with turnips. It was held, in fact, that painting should be purely exterior, that the subject was a matter of indifference, that chromatic play was alone essential. Painting had ceased to be as Delacroix desired, the companion of the symphony and of great poetry. He insists, in a notable passage, that modern portraits (that is to say, of the younger men who have caught the new spirit) have nothing in them of the quality of Carrière or of Prud'hon. Any *motif* is regarded as good. One represents for the sole pleasure of representing. Doubtless modernism contributed to this decline and to this sensual perversion, but modernism as it was understood

by its great masters did not despise style and did not despise subject. That there should be a revolt against a false and conventional nobility was necessary. The official schools were teaching a fictitious, empty grandiloquence. But the masters had a real nobility, they were not afraid of true dramatic qualities, they tried to make perceptible the interior life. I should like to give some impressions of *les jeunes* themselves on this matter.

Jules Zingg, one of the most promising of the younger men, expresses, it seems to me, admirably the real sentiments of the serious French painters. He deplores the apparent liberty which the young artists enjoy. "They become," he says, "in reality slaves of false masters or of the mode. The young artist must isolate himself, but at the same time he must have an ideal, and he must march behind a flag. Obviously he must paint, in order to live and produce a considerable number of canvases which are often sketches, experiments, things done for the sake of practice, but not genuine works. Above all, he must know his business, he must recognize his ignorance and make the necessary effort to acquire knowledge. That is the first and last need of modern art. I have worked," he confesses, "for many years with the hope of discovering one day the secrets of that admirable *métier* of painting. I have not had the advantage of finding a real master. The little that I know I have learnt by constant application." While there are men who speak like that there is more than hope, there is a certitude of a renovation in art.

As for Othon Friesz, he says: "I believe that *les jeunes* are ready for fecund realization. The War has ripened them, they are now reasonable and apply themselves to their art. They have a sense of measure, they are making real efforts to compose veritable tableaux. They are turning away from the *peinture sale* towards a clearer painting." Here again we hear the encouraging voice of sincerity. The general impression that I obtain from a num-

ber of replies from the younger men confirms this view that there is a desire to return to more scrupulous work and to a discipline that had been lost. There is no reason why success should not crown so much excellent endeavour.

*

It will be remembered that the painters who grouped themselves about Manet may be said to date from the years which immediately followed the Franco-Prussian War. The Impressionists were extremely varied in their personal conceptions and in their achievements. There was Renoir, decorative and lyric; Pissarro, catching fleeting effects; Sisley, simple and clear; Monet, to whom the group owes its name because of his landscape entitled "Impression" – still working, at the age of eighty, at his minute pictorial records, in his garden at Giverny; Degas, the most independent of the group, artist of light and of movement. Their common programme was to represent, not reconstructions of an unseizable past, but contemporary things. Their common method was to bring out the values of things, hitherto held to be insignificant, by the study of atmosphere.

Clarity was always sought. Most of their work was in the open air. The forms were not necessarily marked out plainly but tended to dissolve into the nuances of the surroundings. Any study of the painting of to-day will show that some of these precepts at any rate have been forgotten. During the past ten – one might say twenty – years, there has been no cohesion, there has been a confusion of programmes, of temperaments, of ideas. No doctrine has been solid enough and permanent enough to be a real inspiration. The young painter has turned vainly in all directions for true teaching. The new period of experiment may be said to date from 1890. The danger of the liberty which was claimed was that the essential laws of art which had assured the vitality of the École Française were abandoned. Some strong work has been produced, but also much insignificant work which has been accepted at an inflated valuation. It must be confessed

that it was not easy to differentiate between the sincere and the pretentious, the curious and the frankly bad.

What is good is the protest against a mediocre official art which has become feeble and mechanical. There had been enough of allegories and the eternal classical subject pictures. It was time that there were some regard for the *vie quotidienne*. This does not mean that there should now be expressed nothing but contempt for Ingres and David. Gustave Moreau is out of favour, but he had a great influence even over those who have entirely separated themselves from official painting. Among his pupils were allegorists like Georges Desvallières, and Impressionists and revolutionaries like Rouault, Matisse, Guérin and Marquet. He did not seek to check the particular tendencies of his pupils, showing the utmost liberality. There were at the end of the nineteenth century *maîtres d'école* like Bonnat, Jean Paul Laurens, Cormon, Dagnan Bouveret, Luc Olivier Merson, Ferdinand Humbert and François Flameng. Albert Besnard directed the Villa Médicis at Rome, and afterwards the École des Beaux Arts; although greatly attacked he has adopted freer formulas than are usually attributed to officialdom. Nor is Henri Martin to be despised: he borrowed from Pissarro the quality of luminosity and from Puvis de Chavannes a symbolist stylisation, and in his grandiose compositions there is a nobility of design.

The Pointillistes brought in a technical and scientific innovation. Instead of mixing their colours on the palette, they placed spots of colour side by side on the canvas in such manner as to impose themselves upon the retina in a more vibrant mélange. Georges Seurat, who introduced this new æsthetic, grouped about him Paul Signac, H. E. Cross, Maximilien Luce; and Pissarro for a moment tried this mosaic method which was called Neo-Impressionism. Raffaëlli, the painter of popular scenes, arrived by way of Impressionism to pure sensation. Then there was another revolt. It was proposed to substitute for literal truth a symbolism of colours and of lines. There is, however, little

resemblance between the various adepts of this theory; they are of different ages and origins and temperaments.

Paul Gauguin and Odilon Redon detached themselves from the formulas of Impressionism and evolved towards a more synthetic art. Maurice Denis, under the pseudonym of "Paul Louis," gave some consistency to the group by his writings in the review *Arts et Critiques*. The group, however, split up. Gauguin left for Tahiti; Edouard Vuillard and Pierre Bonnard became delicious *intimistes*; Maurice Denis gave us charming decorative compositions, and may justly be regarded as of great importance in modern painting. He has a real ascendancy over *les jeunes* of to-day. His decorations are to be found in the Chapel at Le Vésinet, the College Sainte Croix, the Théâtre des Champs Elysées. With simplicity of means he has produced a remarkable variety of effects. Jacques Emile Blanche is a portraitist of considerable sensibility. Charles Cottet is a poignant painter of Breton scenes, as indeed is Lucien Simon, who is a sincere observer and capital colourist. Le Sidaner evokes the poetry of *paysages*, Aman-Jean pleasingly depicts young women; Cazin represents an intellectual reaction against Impressionism and things in his canvases resume their forms.

*

A great individual master was Eugène Carrière, who escaped from the influences of his time. He was apparently little interested in colour, but he represented in his dim, visionary manner certain eternal sentiments of the family. There are a number of men who have a place apart: Toulouse Lautrec, master of grimace, who found his subjects in the low life of Montmartre; Jean Louis Forain, a satiric illustrator who, like Daumier, was also capable of painting the comedy of character. But the two men who have the most immediate influence over present-day art are perhaps Cézanne and Gauguin. Cézanne gave us astonishing studies of still life. There is some incoherence in his work, but he made a tremendous effort to organize sensations.

His vision was ingenious and his matter was rich. Sometimes he succeeded superbly; at other times, especially in his figures, he appears maladroit and does not produce the effect of life. Camille Mauclair says of him: "He was inspired by an immense desire to become a great painter but lacked the material gifts. His composition is poor, and there are few complete works from his brush. It would be impossible to deny his force, but unfortunately, in choosing him as their hero, the younger men mistook his less desirable qualities for the mark of his genius, and have imitated what was the least worthy of note in Cézanne. In spite of great qualities it may therefore be doubted whether Cézanne has had a good or a bad effect upon modern art. Any insignificant sketch by him was declared to conceal mysterious treasures of style. There has been more mystification, encouraged by picture-dealers interested only in speculation, about Cézanne than there has been in the whole history of traffic in tableaux."

Gauguin, Bohemian adventurer, was a great artist. His colour is superb, his forms are massive, his science of composition admirable. His tones are for the most part simple, he realized the true lyricism of painting. It is to be feared, however, that many young painters were led astray by him. Under the pretext of returning to a primitive ingenuousness, dismissing the rules which had been taught in the schools, they made of painting a singularly facile art, undisciplined, uncontrolled by knowledge. That is why to-day we have such a horde of indifferent, naïve, pretentious and frankly impossible painters.

With the founding of the Salon des Indépendants, where the admission was free, where the jury was abolished, all the eccentric and for the most part incompetent artists found a haven of refuge. There began a period of decadence. Henri Matisse was the leader of *Les Fauves*. He has explained his own design: it is to preserve the freshness and the charm of spontaneity. The choice of his colours, he says, reposes upon no scientific theory;

it is based purely upon observation, sentiment, experience and sensibility. He creates an art which is for the spectator a sort of cerebral repose. The work of Matisse has undergone many evolutions; there has been a constant modification. In some of his pictures he does not practise the deformation that in the hands of less capable men has produced deplorable results. Always does he remain the most refined of colourists. *Les Fauves* to-day are dispersed.

Picasso, the Spanish painter who came to Paris, carried deformation and distortion still farther. Cubism, with Georges Braque and André Lhôte, gave all its attention to volumes. Painting became geometric and dreamed of pure abstraction. Futurism, which was an Italian movement, sought to escape from the law of fixity. It sought to evoke movement by representing simultaneously what is usually expressed in succession. In one of its aspects it was precisely as if a number of cinematographic figures were placed upon each other.

All these influences and others, whatever may be thought of the individual painters, served to create a confusion of spirit. Then we arrive at the post-War crisis. There has been a multiplication of systems, there have been theories enunciated *ad nauseam*, there have been experiments interesting in themselves but which touch only one aspect of painting, there has been an attempt to sweep away the past. Subject became of no importance. There was a fever of production. The rudiments of the art – design, composition, colour – all were neglected. Psychology, significance, evocation were scorned, as the intrusion of literature into painting. The reaction of Impressionism against Academism was timely and essential, but the reaction against Impressionism has been chaotic, unreflecting, and has brought modern art almost to disaster. It is therefore with much interest that one witnesses the beginning of the return in the post-War France to a more sober and sincere frame of mind.

There may be some justification for the disdain into which

Meissonnier and Carolus Duran and Rochegrosse, Bouguereau and others have fallen in these days, but to forget Corot and Millet and Courbet, or to pretend that they are outpassed by André Derain or Van Dongen, is sheer nonsense.

*

One of the most important dates in the history of modern French painting is the scission that took place in 1890 when the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts was born from the Société des Artistes Français. For years, however, there has been little real difference in their aims, and it is not without significance that the old quarrel was after the War buried and the two Salons united. The reunited Salons, which are held in the spring at the Grand Palais, give an adequate idea of the state of the more orthodox French painting. But another Salon – the Salon des Tuileries – was founded in 1923. It promises to show considerably more vigour than the older Salons. Its Committee is composed of Albert Besnard, Aman-Jean, Lucien Simon, René Ménard, Maurice Denis, Desvallières, Le Sidaner, Le Basque, Flandrin, Laprade, Guérin, Bourdelle, Despiau and other painters and sculptors of merit. Some of the men who have habitually shown their works at the Salon d'Automne are exhibiting at the Salon des Tuileries. The new Society has rightly been likened to the Salon des Refusés of 1863, founded by those who protested against the arbitrary decisions of a reactionary jury. The Salon des Refusés, which obtained the patronage of the Emperor, was separated from what may be called the "Salon des Acceptés" by a simple turnstile. Among those who exhibited were Jongkind, Manet, Whistler, Fantin Latour, Pissarro, Cazin and Harpignies. The Salon des Tuileries in spite of its name, is held in a Palais de Bois constructed by the Frères Perret at the Porte Maillot.

The Salon d'Automne fills an honourable place in the art world of Paris. It is the most interesting of all the annual exhibitions. Naturally it has lost the character of audacity which

was attributed to it twenty-one years ago, but it is extremely well conducted and comprehensive. Its President is the architect Frantz Jourdain. From the beginning it had the sympathy of the public, who considered it to be an amusing revolt of the younger men. But the older Salons did not regard the Salon d'Automne as amusing. Carolus Duran, then the President of the "Nationale," forbad the members of his Society to send their pictures to the Salon d'Automne. It is to the credit of Carrière that he immediately wrote Carolus Duran that he would leave the "Nationale" if he was not free to expose his works as he thought fit. The "Nationale" Committee surrendered, but the Municipal Council the next year refused the Petit Palais to the young organization. Happily the Director of Beaux Arts decided to put the Grand Palais at their disposal.

The Autumn Salon is something more than an exhibition of painting. The idea of Frantz Jourdain was to show the public the evolution in all branches of intellectual activity of an epoch. Music and literature found their place besides painting and sculpture. Later the dance was added, and afterwards the Mode under the direction of the dressmaker Poiret. In 1922 the cinema – dubbed "the seventh art" – was also given a place. In the book section not merely illustrations are shown but typography and book-binding. A gastronomic section was opened a few years ago. Like de Goncourt and Huysmans, Frantz Jourdain considers that the art of the cuisine demands taste, initiative and imagination. The Salon has done something to restore the culinary art, of which France has always been proud, to the esteem which it enjoyed before the War. Decorative arts are also encouraged: perhaps it is this section which most differentiates the Salon in the eyes of the public from the other Salons. It has had a great influence upon the development of the post-war decorative arts. Since it was held that it was impossible to judge the decorative arts by isolated specimens, it was resolved to arrange whole rooms which would be decorated by a group of

artists. The effect is striking. There is none of that cold impersonality which usually marks an exhibition of furniture. The large Paris stores have taken a lesson from the Salon: they all now possess ateliers in which the making of modern furniture has been elevated into a genuine craft. These ateliers are directed by such men as Ruhlmann, Dufrenne, Follot. For centuries France has been famous for her styles in furniture, and her jewellers, glass-workers, lace-workers and other craftsmen have been the admiration of the world. The revival – or rather the increased vitality – of every French craft – some of which are regional – is a subject on which much might be written. Tapestries and carpets produced to-day at the Gobelins, the Savonnerie, Beauvais and Aubusson – are of the highest quality. France is still proud of the ceramics which are made in the National Manufactory at Sèvres.

There are two other annual exhibitions – the Salon d'Hiver, founded since the War, but without great success; and the Salon des Indépendants, which gives an opportunity to those who do not care to risk the judgment of a jury to show their work to the public. There are no prizes: all would-be exhibitors stand on an equal footing. Paul Signac has been the President of the "Indépendants" for more than a quarter of a century. This Salon usually occupies the Grand Palais.

In addition to the men who have been incidentally mentioned in the course of this chapter, attention should be called to the interesting work of Charles Camoin, Paul Chabas, Charles Cottet, Yves Alix, Maurice Asselin, Jean Gabriel Domergue, Raoul Dufy – whose brightly coloured decorations are being used by the Gobelins – Dunoyer de Segonzac, who is regarded as the most important leader of the younger men, André Favory, the Japanese Foujita, Albert Gleizes, Paul Kisling, Ferdinand Léger, Marcel Lenoir – who seeks to revive the art of the fresco – Jacqueline Marval, Suzanne Valadon, Jean Marchand – who has a fine sculptural manner – Valloton and Maurice Vlaminck,

whose sharp greens in tempestuous landscapes have won for him deserved appreciation.

*

In sculpture, in spite of the complaint of Rodin that for lack of a great national architecture, the day of sculpture is over, the French have always excelled, and the sculptors of to-day are worthy successors of the men who decorated the great Gothic cathedrals. Paris – and indeed the whole of France – is filled with statuary. The history of French sculpture is full of such names as Jean Goujon, Coysevox, Houdon, Rude, Barye, and in recent times, Falguière, Frémiet, Mercié and Carpeaux have helped to carry on the French tradition. Bartholdi was a powerful master; Albert Bartholomé, the veteran sculptor, has done nothing better than his "Monument aux Morts" in the Père Lachaise – a work of great beauty. He was chosen to commemorate the part that Paris played in the Great War. His impersonation of the city, now in the Tuileries Gardens, has been subjected to a great deal of criticism, but in the opinion of the writer, is full of magnificent energy. Antoine Bourdelle is the master to whom the younger artists listen with most respect. His qualities of measure and of simplicity are apparent in many noble figures, and have properly given him the authority which he now enjoys. The gravity of Bouchard, the grace of Sicard, the vigour of Landowsky and the robustness of Aristide Maillol, are to be noted. Nor should Despiau and Yvonne Serruys be forgotten. The great revelation since the War has undoubtedly been Paul Dardé. Dardé was a goat-keeper who had spent his life in the great expanse of Nature – his only master. His conceptions are of strong originality and profound beauty. When he exhibited his "Faune" he immediately became famous, but he refused to be drawn into the vortex of Paris; he returned to his mountains to proceed with his "Laocoon" and the "Homme Préhistorique" which Dardé means to cut in the rocks of the Massif Central.

The great figure of our age in sculpture is without contest that

of Rodin. Bourdelle himself worked for fifteen years with the Master. Rodin for many years of his life was poor and obscure. He had no relations with the schools and academies. He had to fight against the official sculptors; about each of his works there was controversy. The Society of Authors refused his Balzac. The most contradictory charges were made against him: he was accused of extravagant unreality, and he was accused of casting some of his statues from life. His sincerity, his patience, his force, his inspiration, ended by imposing themselves upon France and upon the world. Like all geniuses he has been more imitated than followed. His technique was prodigious, but he never sacrificed to technical necessities the expression of an idea. The principles on which he worked were classic principles, but he infused everything with such life that he was looked at askance as a revolutionary. It is difficult to estimate his influence. Like all great men, he stands alone.

Urbanism may be regarded as a new art – or science. There is much in the planning and decoration of towns that has not been studied as it is to-day. Even in architecture the reproach that no progress has been made no longer holds good. Engineering has contributed to the development of modern methods of building. This is, above all, an age of concrete, and a new material demands new conceptions. Some of the experiments that have been made are frankly ugly, and it is necessary, if buildings are to be run up rapidly in concrete, to think out bolder means of ornamentation. Mallet Stevens, one of the best-known French architects, rightly says that "something entirely original might be obtained if architects were somewhat more imaginative now that reinforced concrete permits the reduction to a minimum of the different elements of construction, permits the suppression of numerous *points d'appui*, permits an immense simplification. Working in great cubic masses, forms that have not hitherto been used can be designed. The mere addition of decorations that are not an integral part of the building is to be deprecated.

In short, a new technique and a new æsthetic corresponding to present-day life are necessary." Auguste Perret insists above all on fine proportions. All the parts necessary to sustain an edifice should, he thinks, themselves be the ornaments of that edifice. He believes that the place in which the town dweller lives should be elevated above the noise and the dust of the streets, and he would have apartments so constructed that they can be turned towards the sun. In the same way, Pierre Patou declares that the light but resistant modern materials authorize a variety of combinations that were impossible to the worker in stone. He, too, thinks that architects must study the possibilities of the development of buildings in a vertical sense. "The greater height of buildings will," remarks Le Corbusier, "permit the widening of thoroughfares." All the newer men harp upon this theme. They all appear to have found some inspiration in Cubism, which thus passes from painting to architecture. Sauvage affirms that "purity does not imply poverty. Great bold lines, well disposed masses, a more careful composition, are essential." There have been built in Paris large dwelling-houses which recede at each floor as they rise, and secure to each flat air and light and flowered terraces. Some of the ideas which have been put forward are extremely ingenious; perhaps they indicate in what direction architecture will work in the future. The interior of French houses is not as a rule well planned; the architect seems to have fashioned his exterior and then to have cut up the interior space. It will now be easier to fashion the interior and to make the exterior depend upon it.

The history of architecture in France is particularly interesting. The country is filled with the most magnificent cathedrals and châteaux and public edifices of all periods and of all styles. The houses erected at the beginning of the present century are lacking in beauty when compared with the older houses. The streets have lost much of their charm. There is nothing more horrible than the underground stations of the Metropolitan

Railways. But there has been a movement, which was little encouraged, towards the elaboration of a style which would be suitable to the twentieth century. It is hopeless to attempt to copy the charm of other days. The better presentation of volumes, the artistic relation of planes, are of course more important than superficial details. There are envisaged immense towers capable of housing three thousand persons: they would stand wide apart in great roomy thoroughfares which would at least attempt to fulfil the precept of Leonardo da Vinci that the street must be as wide as the house is high. They should be linked up by arches and foot-bridges. Obviously experiments of this kind cannot be made in Paris itself, but on the open spaces around Paris there is no reason why, in time, a new architecture should not have its chance. The increasing cost of land, the economic need for the congregation of millions of persons in one place, undoubtedly favour the growth of Urbanism, and an intelligent renovation of architectural ideas. In any case, whether all this is as yet practicable or not, it is clear that in France there is a growing desire to construct with due regard for economic conditions, hygiene and linear harmony, and that the exponents of this new art are disdainful of decoration as such, seeking great geometrical effects, mathematical rigour, nude surfaces, sobriety and a rational simplicity.

Chapter 13

MUSICAL TENDENCIES

BEFORE the War Germany and Austria and Italy claimed to lead the world in music, and American students at any rate rarely came to France. But now France has made a bid for the leadership. There has been set up in the Forest of Fontainebleau a Summer School for American musicians, and this is only one sign of the times. Certainly Russian music has had much greater influence of recent years than any other music, but the French, if they have not shown the way, have at any rate proved themselves to be admirable interpreters, and there is a new stirring. It may properly be doubted whether the French will ever display in music the genius of other Continental countries, but France learns quickly, and not only in Paris but throughout the land there is a cultivation of music for its own sake. If France does not produce the greatest music, she produces a great deal of pleasing, temperate and, shall we say, intellectual music. In music, as in poetry, the French prefer well defined modes of expression.

A survey of the history of music in France will show that its origins were, on the one hand liturgical, and on the other hand popular. In so far as it was French it was clear and simple. Not until what has been called the organization of the fine arts under Louis XIV, that is to say, in the essentially classical period, did French music attain real depth and breadth. Lulli, who was called to Versailles by the "Roi Soleil," was an Italian, and French music developed on Italian lines. For a long time it was Italy which shaped the opera and the opera ballet, but the French disciples of Lulli were above all elegant and witty. In the eighteenth century came Gluck, a German by birth, and then Jean Rameau, the first of the great French classicals, who invented much in harmony. It was in the closing days of the eighteenth century, in the turmoil of the Revolution, that the Conservatoire National de Musique was founded, and the Con-

servatoire, supported by the State, is still the training ground for French musicians. The students who take the first prizes in the final examinations may hope to enter the Opéra and the Opéra Comique, the two principal State-endowed lyric theatres. But unfortunately – or fortunately, as the case may be – there are so many excellent singers and players turned out by the Conservatoire that many of them have to be content with situations of a more humble kind. It is no uncommon thing to find in the orchestras of the cafés which abound in Paris and the provinces, violinists who are announced as *premier prix*. Certainly this tends to popularize music: one can hear excellent music excellently executed almost anywhere.

The nineteenth century was rich in musicians – Boieldieu, Auber, Hérold and Meyerbeer – who wrote *Les Huguenots* and *Le Prophète*. Berlioz, a real musical genius, came with *La Damnation de Faust*, and Bizet with *Carmen* and *L'Arlésienne*. Lalo and Delibes followed. Ambroise Thomas was regarded in his day as among the best of the composers for the stage, and *Hamlet* and *Mignon* are still played. Gounod was a notable figure, though often faultlessly null. During the Second Empire Offenbach, a Parisian though a German, was the favourite composer of operettes. Reyer, the disciple of Wagner, is little played nowadays, but Massenet, whose *Manon* retains all of its popularity, is still appreciated. It will be observed that the French in music, as indeed in many branches of human activity, absorb readily, and among the makers of French music are to be found many whose origins are not French. This applies to the great César Franck who was born in Belgium, and gained a painful living in France as organist and teacher. Nothing nobler has ever been written than his *Beatitudes* and his *Redemption*, and he has placed his stamp unmistakably on modern music. To him we owe the search for purity in music, which is a feature of the best productions of our time. Vincent d'Indy did much fine

work and he strove unremittingly to carry on the movement which the obscure organist had begun.

There was a rival talent of a very different kind in the field. Debussy was a remarkable technician, and his influence has been felt in recent French music which we regard as typical. The author of *Pélléas et Mélisande* receives the grateful homage of most of the younger men. Before he became a prophet in his own country he was known abroad, but when he was once recognized for what he is in France, there was a veritable Debussy cult. Many musicians learned their technique from this master of an incisive and delicate language. When he died, composers of many lands produced works in his homage; among them were Bela Bartok, Paul Dukas (the most distinguished of his French disciples); Manuel de Falla, Eugène Goossens, Francisco Malipiero, Maurice Ravel, Albert Roussel, Florent Schmitt, Erik Satie and Igor Stravinsky. There is a sense in which Debussy is the most French of French composers. The French had always oscillated between the German and the Italian schools.

The attempt after the War to stamp out Wagner, to prohibit any performance of his works in the concert rooms and at the Opéra, was exceptionally stupid. It was bound to fail, for it is impossible for any people – and particularly the French – to exclude the most tremendous musical genius of the last century. After a violent struggle the barriers were broken down, and to-day Wagner is again received in Paris with every honour. One can only deplore that Camille Saint-Saëns, one of the foremost of French musicians, should have ranged himself among the anti-Wagnerites. The aged French Master had consummate skill in technique, but he was deficient in the deeper human emotions. His *Samson et Dalila* is the opera that is most often performed at the national temple of music.

Among other notable composers is Gabriel Fauré, recently deceased. He has charm, and he is often rich and ingenious.

Nevertheless he seeks simplicity and taboos grandiloquent effects. He has found a new and discreet manner of expressing old things, and though his inspiration is limited, he must be ranked among the most sincere of artists. Alfred Bruneau, who is Inspector General of Musical Education, has in *L'Attaque du Moulin*, *Le Rêve* and *Le Jardin du Paradis*, written works which should contain in them the elements of a long popularity. From the age of twenty-one, Maurice Ravel was famous. His compositions are among the most personal of the day. He follows the descriptive tendency of the twentieth-century music in *Les Contes de Ma Mère l'Oye*, and in the chamber music and in the ballets, such as *L'Heure Espagnole*, which he has produced. He has been compared with Debussy, and the comparison is not unjustified. He is not excelled to-day in the domain of fantasy. The concert-halls have added to the renown of Albert Roussel as a composer of coloured symphonies, but this former naval officer has also done much work for the theatre. Witkowski of the Schola Cantorum and the Société des Grands Concerts de Lyon, deserves to be even better known than he is. Charles Widor, the Secretary of the Académie des Beaux Arts, and a professor at the Conservatoire, is rightly distinguished for his concertos and his Mass for Two Organs and Two Choirs, and his Variations for the Harp and Orchestra. As for Henri Rabaud (now the Director of the Conservatoire) he has written a great deal for the Concerts and for the Opera – *La Procession Nocturne*, *La Fille de Roland*, *Marouf* – all of it colourful and clever. Gabriel Pierné is not only the Chef d'Orchestre of the Concerts Colonne, he is the composer of *La Samaritaine*, *La Coupe Enchantée*, *Francesca di Rimini*, and of sonatas and morceaux symphoniques.

Standing in the foremost ranks of present-day musicians is Louis Aubert who, with his *Forêt Bleue*, *Habanera*, *Poème Arabe*, continues in some sense Emmanuel Chabrier whose *Espana* was a date in the history of descriptive music. Guy Ropartz may, on the other hand, be said to belong to the family of Franck. The

gravity of Franck and the modernism of Chabrier have each left their mark on French music, while the realism of Gustave Charpentier, with his *Louise* above all, also made a profound impression. Samuel Rousseau is hailed as one of the most promising of the younger men, and *Le Hulla* is a medley of Oriental sounds, sights, and perfumes. Samuel Rousseau, though among the latest arrivals, is careful not to affect the eccentricities of some of his contemporaries. He developed early in his career gifts of prudence, and he uses his sure technique with extraordinary taste. He refuses to be bold and revolutionary: he aims above all at pleasing. Robert Casadessus is not only a pianist but a composer with a rich temperament, displaying plenty of *fougue*. Paul Vidal, one of the professors at the Conservatoire, takes an honourable place with *La Reine Fiammette*, an opera, and *La Maladetta*, a ballet.

One has been obliged to pass rapidly over some of the most meritorious musicians, but one must at least mention the delicate Raynaldo Hahn, the pleasant Messager, Claude Terrasse, full of *esprit*, Déodat de Séverac, Charles Koechlin, Georges Hue, Gabriel Dupont (the author of *Antar*), the organist Dupré, the meditative Paul Le Flem, and Paul Dupin, whose verve is prodigious. Florent Schmitt was hardly understood only a few years ago, and was considered to have broken away from all the traditions. But in fact the profound science of Florent Schmitt is orthodox enough, and he is now becoming the chief of one of the great musical schools. He has turned from the stage to become a teacher and to devote himself to pure music. Unfortunately it often happens that the best endowed of the French musicians are by the necessities of daily life obliged to renounce the joy of composition on a vast scale, but it will be indeed unfortunate if Florent Schmitt does not produce a great work.

*

We now come to the noisy manifestations of the groups which

stand at the extreme left – the musicians in the so-called vanguard. For a long time to come they will be discussed; sometimes they will be condemned as mere *fumistes*, and sometimes they will be greeted as innovators deserving of the highest praise. Erik Satie may properly be taken as the chief of the altogether unorthodox musicians who have tried to shake off the last fetters of tonality and have made for themselves new rules. Formerly one supposed that æsthetic theories were elaborated after the production of masterpieces. Poe, for example, explains the mechanism of the "Raven," but one finds it difficult to believe that he had such ideas concisely in mind before he wrote his poem. In painting and in music one suspects explanations to be after-thoughts. But the men of to-day are terribly conscious of themselves and their theories: they do not leave to commentators the task of discovering principles, dogmas and laws in their works. They formulate theories first – some of them extremely wild – and announce their intention of writing a *chef d'œuvre* at some later date. Occasionally they develop, in spite of their doctrines, on more ordinary lines. Such it would appear is the case of Arthur Honegger, originally one of the famous Six – Auric, Milhaud, Poulenc, Tailleferre – who were inspired by Satie. *Le Roi David*, when performed at the Salle Gaveau, obtained a genuine success, and even an ultra modern piece like *Pacific*, full of the sounds of locomotives, seems to be appreciated by the Paris public. As for Darius Milhaud, one may frankly enjoy his music for such extraordinary ballets as were invented by Jean Cocteau for the Swedish Dancers – *L'Homme et son Désir*, *Le Bœuf sur le Toit* – and even recognize their musical qualities without being satisfied that they are music. The Six is at any rate broken up, and each of the members is developing in his own way. When Erik Satie first played his *Socrate* in public many people considered it to be a joke, and a somewhat monotonous and protracted joke at that. There is in all he does a remarkable vein of sardonic

humour. He despises the old rules of harmony, and mocks at the contrapuntal laws. He demands complete liberty to assemble as he pleases bouquets of notes. What the future will think of the "prose" of Auric and of Poulenc, of the violent dissonances of Darius Milhaud, cannot be anticipated here.

Most of the so-called "futurists" express the utmost contempt for musicians like Debussy and Ravel. A notable exception is Georges Migot who, although belonging to the new generation which has issued from the War – inquiet and energetic, finding no satisfaction in the suave languor of musical impressionism – yet works with an intelligent respect for the "demoded past." Certain post-war musicians believe that they have definitely condemned their predecessors in charging them with suavity. One is tempted to ask how far rag-time and jazz influence them; but although one may detect in modern music, after centuries of refinement, a tendency to return to the primitive *volupté* of rhythmical shocks, yet jazz is too carefully regulated and is by no means the erratic thing it seems, to correspond to the new art. If the mummification of music, its imprisonment and petrification in classical forms should be broken, as the young men pretend, nevertheless the reaction has often not even the logic, and certainly not the rhythm of rag-time. It often loses itself in mere incoherence.

Georges Auric with an air of finality recently wrote: "It is no longer necessary to discuss the successive bankruptcy of so many æsthetic systems, the Wagnerian *débâcle* and the ruin of Debussy. We have since had the music-hall, the parades of the fair, and the American orchestra." Jean Cocteau, who made himself an apostle of this school, wrote: "The café concert is pure: the theatre is always corrupt. It is in the café concert that without doubt the young musicians can take up the thread lost in the Germano-Slav labyrinth." But if the young musician does indeed take up these threads, and begins with a superficial resemblance to the irresponsible clowning of the sawdust ring,

he soon breaks them. Milhaud, for example, separates himself from everything when he declares: "There is no more tonality: vive the atonal!" M. André Cœurroy, an eminent critic, endeavours to explain the theory of those who combat the system of tonality: "This system has only functioned on a single plane and is now exhausted. Why should not all the planes be confounded? Why should not the right hand play in C major while the left hand plays in F? Has not Mozart, in a Minuet, made the horns play on a different tonal plane from that of the strings? Does he not make the first violin play in G major, the second in E, the alto in E♭, the counter-bass in B♭ and the horns in F? If he calls that a musical pleasantry, he is wrong; on the contrary, he has made a fruitful discovery." Thus it is urged that if the musical "futurists" are not understood, it is because they are judged from an antiquated standpoint of tonality, just as the Cubists were misunderstood in painting because it is not easy to forget the old perspective. Consonance and dissonance no longer exist in the sense of being opposed to each other: there are only free accords.

*

The principal grand concerts in Paris are the Concerts Colonne which are given in the great theatre of the Châtelet; the Concerts Lamoureux in the Salle Gaveau; and the Concerts Pasdeloup, which were revived after the War and have been given in various halls – the Cirque d'Hiver, the Opéra, and now at the Mogador Theatre. The orchestras are composed of the most skilful executants, and they do not shrink from presenting the most advanced works. In this respect perhaps the Concerts Pasdeloup are particularly free from any desire to cling to a safe path. They encourage to a remarkable degree the young musicians, and they make the most risky experiments. Their programmes are full of novelties. Then there are capital concerts given by the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, and also by the S.M.I. (Société Musicale Indépendante). The

Société Philharmonique, the Société des Instruments Anciens and the Revue Musicale (which gives concerts at the Vieux Colombier and is perhaps the most advanced of all the musical associations) are also extremely interesting. At the end of a passage on the Boulevard de Strasbourg one will find an ancient salle in which the Concerts Touche (among the oldest and most meritorious of the French capital) are given. Five years ago Albert Doyen founded Popular Concerts in the huge Trocadéro. The object of "Les Fêtes du Peuple" was to conduct a sort of musical evangelism among the masses. The choirs are composed of volunteers – men, women and children – who devote much time to long and careful rehearsals. The orchestra is strengthened by professional musicians. Altogether the effort was admirable and real homogeneity was obtained. The most nominal fees were charged for admission.

Among the most noteworthy *chefs d'orchestre* are Pierné, who has a sure musical instinct and possesses great authority, directing little attention upon his own person; Philippe Gaubert at the Opéra, who is sober and discreet and who excels in the interpretation of Mozart, Debussy and Ravel; Rulhman, also at the Opéra; Rhené Baton, whose mastery has been affirmed at the revived Pasdeloup Concerts, and who follows with his gestures the least inflexions, and indulges in an expressive mimic; Henri Busser, who has been both at the Opéra Comique and at the Opéra, and knows by heart nearly all the repertory; Paul Paray, the successor of Camille Chevillard at the Lamoureux Concerts, who had a special veneration for Schumann, and helped to make known in France Russian symphonic works; Albert Wolff, a musician of great virtuosity; Inghelbrecht, one of the younger men who now conducts at the Opéra Comique, and is violent, impetuous and enthusiastic – a real *animateur*. It would be invidious to attempt to pick out a few names from the excellent singers who are to be found at the Opéra and the Opéra Comique. The companies have changed considerably

since the War, but have not suffered in the process of reformation. Among the best native interpreters are Victor Gilles, one of the most distinguished Chopin players in the world, Blanche Selva, Alfred Cortot and Edouard Risler, who is especially skilled in the interpretation of Beethoven Sonatas. As a violinist Jacques Thibaud stands at the head of his profession.

Chapter 14

SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

THERE have been many attempts to define French philosophy. These attempts are contradictory: one writer will declare with a certain plausibility that the chief characteristic of French thought is its objectivity, its methodical approach to all problems on rationalistic lines; another writer will affirm that French thought is essentially mystical and, especially in its Bergsonian developments, is anti-intellectual. The truth is, of course, that French philosophy is many sided. Even in the schools the greatest liberty is left to the professor. Formerly pedagogic philosophy was confined to a definite programme, but now, as Professor Bracq observes, State Philosophy, like the State Church, is disappearing. Indeed one finds that the most original French philosophers are for the most part in the schools. The teachers are not mere exponents of textbooks, but are sincere, conscientious and broad-minded. While cultivating the largest eclecticism, they do not neglect to guide the mind of the pupil. But above all, they delight in the teaching of philosophy as a training for the reasoning faculties. This may mean a certain lack of unity, but it is probably better so. On the whole, the influence of Victor Cousin with his efforts towards the reconciliation of ideas, is the strongest; though the spiritualism of Bergson has impregnated modern philosophy in France – even if more slowly than in other countries. There has been since the War no such interest in philosophy as when the celebrated professor at the Collège de France gave his lectures which brought together crowds of men and women of all classes.

The most cursory glance at the history of French philosophy will indicate that it has followed no straight line; it has zigzagged from Descartes to Boutroux. If there is any dominating figure it is that of Descartes. The apostle of common sense and of order, he finds a place for everything. He is consistent and above

all clear. In this respect his metaphysics were totally different from German metaphysics, and in spite of many vicissitudes, clarity remains the key-note of French philosophical expression. But there was also in the seventeenth century that amazing figure Pascal, who has pointed the way to almost everything that exists in modern philosophy, and who represents another aspect of the French philosophical genius – that of its reliance on intuitions. His brain aglow, he leapt rapidly over the chasms of thought. On the one hand we have therefore the love of orderly procedure, and on the other hand we have the habit of brilliant deductions. In the teaching of Henri Poincaré – a great philosopher as well as the foremost of French mathematicians – there is an insistence time and again on the need for swift guesses. Eighteenth-century philosophy is, for the most part, at once sceptical and curious: it examines everything in a spirit of doubt. There is Lamarck, the precursor of Darwin, Montesquieu, Condorcet, and in a less systematic way, Voltaire. Then we have the sentimentalism, the romanticism and the mysticism of Rousseau, which continued into the nineteenth century where these qualities were emphasized. Victor Cousin tried to harmonize the divergent views, he endeavoured to discover the essential truth which resides in apparently opposite doctrines.

If there is one thing that appears to run through all French philosophy it is the constant appeal to common sense, and its reference of all thought to human experience. If Germany has produced more philosophical systems, France has certainly struck out more living ideas on every subject that affects mankind than has Germany. English thought may particularly be traced in France, while French thought has in its turn modified the views of the great English thinkers. The beginnings of the visible world, the origins of society, and the speculative dogmas affecting human progress have nowhere engaged the attention of men more than in France. Maine de Biran is rightly regarded

as one of the founders of modern psychology. Experimentation was given a new life by Claude Bernard. Auguste Comte, the father of Positivism, was bent on blending realism and religion – of constructing a new religion for mankind – for always there is this desire to bring belief into consonance with reality. Littré helped to elaborate these theories of Comte. Cournot with his "probablism" is a great figure of the nineteenth century.

So French philosophy comes to Boutroux who protested against scientific dogmatism and showed "the contingency of natural laws"; and to Bergson, who has illuminated many dark places. It is difficult now to realize how much the contribution of Bergson to metaphysics was resented in certain French circles, because it was felt that he undermined the foundations of human reason on which they considered that everything should be built. This resentment has passed and the conceptions of Bergson have leavened the whole of French philosophy, which perhaps tended to be too arrogant in its reliance on the human intellect. The basis of belief has been sapped. There is to-day less dogmatism than a generation ago.

France received the theories of Einstein eagerly, although she did not accept them without the most critical examination. Nothing served more to show the alertness of the French mind than the fact that immediately after the War, when everything German was, under the stress of prejudice, banned, and the German professors were under a cloud, an exception was made in favour of Einstein, and he was invited without delay to visit the Institut in Paris. There he was submitted to a sort of cross-examination, and M. Paul Painlevé who, although a politician, has never abandoned his professorial work, tentatively opposed certain objections in order to elicit clearer definitions. The number of books which were published in France on the theories of Einstein – both highly technical and popular – in the first five years after the War, should effectively refute

any suggestion that in matters of thought the French are insular. They take the liveliest interest in all that appertains to our conceptions of the universe.

Under the Third Republic an immense stimulus has been given to philosophical studies which Napoleon III had tried to suppress. In all the schools philosophy takes a large place. At the Faculty of Letters there are eight or nine professors of philosophy, and three or four at the Collège de France. In every lycée there is a professor of philosophy. The textbooks by Janet, Penjon, Malapert and others are models of their kind. One must agree that of all subjects taught in the French schools, philosophy is that which is taught by the ablest of the educators. Theodore Ribot, Abel Rey, Jacques Chevalier, Félix le Dantec and many others have done excellent interpretive work. Lachelier left his mark on a generation of students at the École Normale Supérieure. Fouillée, with his *idées forces* – the power of ideas to create the objective world – was, it seems to me, in the true line of to-day's tendencies. Men like Renouvier emphasize the categorical imperative, and put speculation on an ethical basis; Ravisson who conceived God as a "cumulative intuition"; and many others, fought against narrow materialism and also against narrow theology. What has been called "mobilism" and the "vital impulse" are ideas which will continue profoundly to modify French thought. Not unconnected with the strain that one finds in this teaching is the amazing growth of such movements as that of Coué, who set up a School of Mental Healing at Nancy and afterwards at Paris. In a more orthodox manner Charcot and Féré at the Salpetrière studied the possibilities of suggestive therapeutics. A number of publishers continually issue from the press works of philosophy, and there is altogether an extraordinary activity in this field.

Philosophy is not dead, imprisoned in this or that system, but is a free and living thing. The Schools do not shut themselves up in watertight compartments. There is no French thesis as

such; only a gigantic manifestation of philosophical energy which enters every part of the speculative domain.

*

Whatever there may be to deplore in the post-War France, there is certainly no slackening of interest in pure thought, nor is there any slackening of interest in sociological subjects, in economics and in historical research. Gabriel Hanotaux, Aulard and Seignebos worthily carry on the work of such men as Albert Sorel, Lavisse and Gabriel Monod, and a number of others are historians of a high order. History as taught in the schools is open to the objection which may be taken against all school history: it is necessarily incomplete and unsatisfactory in that it presents a special point of view, but it may truly be said that there is a genuine attempt at objectivity. As for archæological research, it is being carried on indefatigably. In Syria General Gouraud encouraged excavators who obtained valuable results. At Delphi and in other parts of Greece; in Asia, in North Africa, French archæologists have pursued their task without respite; while in France itself not only have Gallo-Roman cities been discovered, but important discoveries in respect of prehistoric life have been made. Everybody knows what France has done in Egyptology. Champollion learned how to decipher hieroglyphics, and in Assyrian, in Persian, in Phœnician, in Babylonian and in Indian studies the French have displayed the utmost interest. Many aspects of the Far East were first made known to Europe by the French Jesuits, who inquired into Chinese civilization, and in French Indo-China, which has been considerably developed since 1919, the French concern for things Oriental increases. In Paris museums devoted to special subjects – one of them to Chinese art – abound. It is not perhaps usual to think of the French as explorers, but in fact they have done much for geography. Nobody has given such a full and exact description of the earth as Elisée Reclus. There are many famous travellers and colonizers: Canada, it will be re-

membered, was discovered by Jacques Cartier in 1535, and it was a Frenchman who first explored Louisiana, and another Frenchman who first saw Niagara Falls. Berlier was a great Indian traveller, and Bougainville showed the way to Cook. In Africa the French particularly distinguished themselves. Of recent years, the French have been pioneers in attempts to cross the Sahara by motor-car and aeroplane, and their expeditions have been so successful that it will presently be possible for the ordinary voyager to traverse Northern and Central Africa without discomfort.

In mathematics France has shown herself to be especially strong during the past generation. The name of Henri Poincaré is known wherever mathematics are known, and at the present time France possesses among her most distinguished workers in this field Dr. Appell, Emile Borel, Emile Picard and Paul Painlevé. Others who are known as specialists are Charles Bertrand, Hermite, Darboux and Tannery.

But undoubtedly it is in the realm of medicine, physiology, chemistry and cognate studies that the French have excelled. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance that has been attributed to Pasteur. In France itself, and all over the world, he is venerated as the greatest of modern scientists. He has effected an amazing revolution in medical thought. He it was who proclaimed that fermentation in articles of food is due to living organisms which could be destroyed by heat – by "pasteurisation" as it is now called. He demonstrated that there was no spontaneous generation of microbes. This is not the place in which to discuss the value of his introduction of vaccines to combat the microbes which, according to present-day belief, are responsible for many diseases. Undoubtedly there has been a certain exaggeration among his disciples in respect of the laws which he laid down, but in the cure of rabies, anthrax, and in the preservation of food, he is generally regarded as having done more for mankind than any modern

scientist. The Pasteur Institute was founded in Paris by international subscription, and there are similar institutions in many places.

Surgery, which was practised by the French with an astonishing degree of skill during the War, is held to owe almost everything to the science of bacteriology which largely removed the risk of septic poisoning. One has only to pick up such newspapers as the *Temps* and the *Journal des Débats* to read accounts of the proceedings at the Académie des Sciences: great space is devoted to them, and the work of many of the men is based upon that of Pasteur. Dr. Pierre Roux, now the Director of the Pasteur Institute, has carried the Pasteur methods much further. There are now serums for diphtheria, for tetanus, and for other maladies. Dr. Calmette has devoted his attention on the same lines to the treatment of tuberculosis – which, for reasons it is not easy to discover, has made great ravages in France. Bacteriologists and others who have been connected with the Pasteur Institute, include Dr. Metchnikoff, Dr. Chantemesse, Dr. Yersin. Dr. Doyen was led by his researches to the view that cancer is also a disease which is caused by microbes. Charles Richet, on the other hand, demonstrated the growing indifference of the organism to serums. Pinard, as a famous gynæcologist, has, in Parliament and outside Parliament, fought against the declining birth-rate in France. It was Pelletier and Caventou who first prepared quinine, and Flourens who discovered the anæsthetic property of chloroform. Nor even in this chapter, which is necessarily summary, can the startling experiments of Dr. Voronoff be omitted. Voronoff considers that he has found a means of rejuvenation in the grafting of interstitial glands, and he has further set out by the same means to improve various races of domestic animals, notably to obtain more wool from sheep. Although Madame Curie is by birth a Pole, she was the collaborator in Paris of her brilliant husband who discovered two new metals – polonium and radium, and she is regarded as

one of the brightest ornaments of French science. It would not be surprising if she were to be the first woman elected to the Académie Française. America, after the conclusion of the War, generously enabled her to procure quantities of the rare and mysterious substance known as radium, and she pursues in Paris her investigation of radio-activity. She was the first woman for whom a Chair at the Sorbonne was created.

France has a long martyrology of brave and disinterested workers in X-rays, and not a month goes by in which one cannot read in the newspapers of some accident to an operator in this field.

*

Marcellin Berthelot is the greatest French chemist of modern times, and had he given a commercial turn to his investigations he would undoubtedly have acquired an immense fortune. His analine dyes helped to revolutionize an industry; he may even be taken to be the founder of the modern perfumery trade. He invented smokeless powder, and made many experiments in explosives. He was the first to suggest that food might some day be produced from air and from water in tablet form to be carried in one's pocket. Daniel Berthelot, a son of Marcellin Berthelot, in a recent book, *La Science et la Vie Moderne*, has carried these speculations further and foresees the employment of ultra-violet rays in the fabrication of aliments. The elder Berthelot was the founder of thermo-chemistry. There is, indeed, no branch of chemistry in which he did not work with striking results. He is buried with Madame Berthelot in the Pantheon.

There are several popular writers on astronomical science, but none of them is so well known as Camille Flammarion, who makes an appeal to the imagination by his literary qualities and romantic conceptions. It is not long ago that the system of human measurements elaborated by Alphonse Bertillon was adopted by the French police, and it has since been generally

applied. To-day the French have turned their attention to mechanical invention. In aeronautics they have long led the way: to France we owe the balloon, invented by the Montgolfier brothers; the parachute, invented by Blanchard. It was in France that Santos Dumont first flew, and in 1908 the American brothers Wright also flew in France. What has been described as "the first air journey," was undertaken by the Frenchman Farman in the same year. From Blériot who crossed the Channel, Cavez who flew over the Simplon, and Garros who crossed the Mediterranean, to the skilful aviators of the War and the no less remarkable aviators of the after-War years who set up all kinds of records, is not a far cry in point of time, but in point of development of the machine it is a far cry indeed.

The motor-car was taken up in France from the beginning, and France well holds her own in this industry, as may be ascertained by a visit to the annual Exhibition (which has grown to enormous proportions) held at the Grand Palais. In electricity and telephony and telegraphy France has not lagged behind. Branly, who still works humbly, refusing all rewards, in his little laboratory, preceded Marconi. To-day Belin, who invented telephotography, is perfecting the apparatus by which photographs and written messages can be transmitted. Photographs have already been sent across the Atlantic, and the French have instituted the ordinary commercial transmission of handwritten messages from Strasbourg to Paris as a beginning. Altogether it would be easy to show that France is to-day, as always, in the vanguard of science and of invention. Her savants have worked in the most disinterested manner, and have failed to commercialize their ideas. It has frequently happened that France has made discoveries which more practical men of other countries have caught up with alacrity and out of which France has reaped no profit. It has already been pointed out, but it must be repeated in this connection, that a more practical spirit is now prevailing in France, and while one would not wish to see the

disappearance of a fine scientific disinterestedness, still in the world as it is to-day, France realizes the need for industrialization, and in particular, it is to be noted that there is a search, which will probably be successful, for synthetic oils, which will make France independent of the great oil trusts.

Chapter 15

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

EDUCATION in France is like most other things, highly centralized, and there are proposals constantly put forward for a still closer connection between the various parts of the educational system. The ideal, as it presents itself to some educationalists, is a single school – l'école unique – in which should be included the lowest classes and the highest classes. The ladder should be unbroken; outside the State organization there should be no form of education whatever; anything which fails to conform to the State plan should be rigorously suppressed. Never was there such a passion for uniformity as there is in the French educational system. It is not the fault of the authorities if Frenchmen remain individuals with individual temperaments and individual qualities. The ideal has not been reached yet, but nevertheless there is little outside the recognized schools, at the head of which is the Minister of Public Instruction. The Minister of Public Instruction is a Minister who is not changed quite so frequently as other Ministers. Often he is allowed to carry on under successive Governments: some continuity is therefore preserved. But the Minister of Public Instruction until after the War was also Recteur of the Université de Paris, and the professorial head of the University was merely the Vice-Recteur. Recently this has been changed: the professorial head of the University has become the Recteur, and as he is really responsible for education throughout France, his elevation in rank should enable him to combat the whims of succeeding Ministers, who often have few qualifications for their job.

As it is, however, political passions have lately been displayed. Because a Nationalist Minister, M. Léon Bérard, was a Humanist, he imposed Greek and Latin; his successor, M. François Albert, a Radical Minister, revealed himself a Modernist, who would not insist upon Latin and Greek. The controversy is an old one. The traditional French view is that Rome

obtained its culture from Greece, and that France is the true *continuateur* of Roman culture. It is believed that whatever standards other countries may choose to adopt, it is the duty as well as the privilege of France to preserve the old languages and the old cultures. The Modernists cry that France, by giving such a large place to Classicism in her studies, must fall behind in the industrial and the scientific race. They affect to despise useless learning, and lay more stress upon practical and scientific instruction. If languages are to be taught, they should be living languages. Against this contention one will find, in many French organs, the strongest protests. "Let the modern world become what it may," say the Classicists, "we have a sacred function to fulfil. We are not opposed to progress provided progress in the commercial sphere does not imply any sacrifice of our principles, but we insist first and foremost that every Frenchman shall be at least a Latin scholar, and shall have more than a smattering of Greek."

It is somewhat lamentable that the struggle between Classicism and Modernism should have become a political struggle. If there is any subject which should be taken out of the political domain it is surely that of education. Moreover, there seems to be no reason why there should be this particular party division among the educationalists. M. Herriot, the leader of the Radicals, is a man of the traditional culture, and M. Léon Blum, the Socialist leader, is fond of displaying his classical erudition. On the Nationalist side there are to be ranged the great captains of industry who should, logically, favour a more modern system of education. It is surely the business men who have most reason for declaring that the future of France depends upon its breaking away from its undue attachment to Latin and Greek, and who should denounce any excessive devotion to the past at the expense of the present. But apparently it was considered after the War to be democratic to make Latin and Greek optional, and reactionary to make them compulsory. Thus it comes about

that the Radicals are the Modernists and the Nationalists are the Classicists.

The struggle, as I have said, is not a new one. As long ago as 1902 the Education Minister – then M. Leygues – decided that Latin and Greek should no longer be compulsory in the schools. He was backed up by a majority which considered that France should bring itself up to date, should develop its industries and its commerce, should think of practical advantages rather than of culture as it had been understood. It was argued that France was falling behind in this highly industrialized age because the schoolboy was chiefly obliged to spend his time in learning Latin and Greek which would not, it was contended, profit him in his after-life, to the neglect of scientific and technical knowledge. There was considerable truth in this, and whatever side one takes in the quarrel between Modernism and Classicism, there can be little doubt that France was carrying the idea of a mere bookish culture too far, and that its youth was ill-equipped for the strenuous battle of life of to-day. Its youth was at once the most cultured and the most ignorant youth of Europe. Both Germany and England were leaving France behind in Europe, while America had long gone on ahead. That is why it was thought fit to change the system in 1902. Even then the question was partly a political question, though there were advocates of the Humanities in every group, and advocates of Modern teaching in every group. The Radicals were then in power and Clericalism was a living issue. Now, the Clericalists were also Latinists, and the Radicals were not uninfluenced by this circumstance. The reform of 1902 by no means did away with the teaching of Latin and Greek, but it made it possible for the schoolboy to pass his Baccalauréat without undergoing an examination in these subjects.

For a long time the educational system remained to all intents and purposes undisturbed, but when M. Léon Bérard, the Education Minister of M. Poincaré, was in office, he had but

one thought – to destroy the reform of 1902 and to revert, with modifications, to the former methods. His proposals hung fire in Parliament. It is doubtful whether Parliament would have given him permission to make the change; but after long discussions in commissions and elsewhere, he boldly took the course of issuing a decree which restored Latin and Greek to their former place in the curriculum. Naturally there was considerable indignation; he aroused great hostility. His own party deprecated the somewhat arbitrary measure, but did not repudiate him.

Now the educational diploma is of much more importance in France than any similar educational certificate is either in England or America. Without the degree of *bachelier* – which does not correspond to our Bachelorship – it is almost impossible to obtain a large number of posts, and it is quite impossible to obtain the best posts. It is a passport to nearly all the careers. In English-speaking countries it is not untrue to say that, except for certain special circles, it is not of great importance what kind of official education a boy has had; he is judged by his efficiency and not by his diplomas. England, for example, has recently had Ministers – including a Prime Minister – who have come from the old Board Schools. The barriers which were at one time erected against those who do not belong to a certain set, and have not passed through certain schools, are breaking down. But France is exceedingly conservative in this respect. Careers are open to talent of every kind – but only on condition that talent has passed by clearly-traced paths. It is therefore of great importance that the way through the school should be made as easy as possible. It was alleged against M. Bérard that in issuing his decree he was endeavouring to make the way harder, and to draw class distinctions which would correspond to educational distinctions. Therefore the succeeding Radical Government, with M. François Albert as Education Minister, proceeded to undo the work of M. Bérard.

It must be admitted that he was approved by popular opinion. Undoubtedly there is something of a change in French sentiment. It was roughly the purpose of the Radicals to give those who desired to pursue a Classical education the opportunity of doing so, but at the same time, to give those who desired to pursue a Modern education similar opportunities, and to enable those on one side or the other to stand on an equal footing. The fear has been expressed that since the fight about the Humanities is a political fight, there may be perpetual reversions to this or that system as the various political parties successively come into power, and that every few years Latin and Greek will be put back into the curriculum or taken out of it. But this fear is probably unfounded. Although there is a large body of feeling in favour of the Humanities, the majority of Frenchmen are coming to believe that the boy should be free to choose in accordance with his abilities and in accordance with his ambitions. Doubtless the discussion will long continue between the two parties, but even though France attaches more importance to universal knowledge of Greek and Latin than any other European country, it is to be anticipated that Modernism has come back to stay.

There is, of course, much to be said on both sides: the main idea of the Classicists is that it is wrong to attempt to guide the young intelligence into the narrow ways of specialization: Greek and Latin are taken as an instrument of general education. On the other hand, as Professor Aulard – who cannot be reckoned among the antagonists of the Humanités holds, it might be better to reserve this particular culture for those who show a special aptitude, and who are judged capable of profiting by it. If only those who receive a Greek and Latin culture are allowed to arrive at the Baccalauréat, it follows that many worthy French scholars will be unable to proceed beyond the lycée, for the Baccalauréat is required before the youth can sit for the higher examinations, such as those of the *licence* and the ***doctorat***. The

superior schools and colleges would be closed to them. Professor Aulard has protested strongly that there is no question of differentiating between rich and poor. Under the old educational régime the son of the rich man was taught Latin whether he was fitted for such studies or not, but M. Aulard would reserve this culture for an élite of intelligence, not an élite of wealth. Latin is not a subject that should be taught to everybody but is itself a special study.

*

The Recteur de la Université de Paris is at present Dr. Paul Appell, a man of great general culture and, like many of the foremost of the educationalists in France, a mathematician. He is, by virtue of his position, in control not only of Superior studies but of Primary and of Secondary Education. There are for each of these branches of Enseignement Directors who have their headquarters in Paris. France is divided up geographically into teaching districts. There are five Faculties – of Law, of Medicine, of Sciences, of Letters and of Pharmacy. At Strasbourg there is even a Faculty of Theology.

In 1806 was founded the Imperial University. A body of professors was to assume in the name of the State the education of childhood and youth. At its head was the Grand Master – now the Minister of Public Instruction. The University had a monopoly of teaching: with the exception of the Seminaries there was no establishment outside the University without the authorization of the Grand Master. But later the influence of the clergy became preponderant, and Primary Education in particular fell into the hands of the Bishops. The monopoly of Secondary Education was suppressed, and, still later, liberty was accorded in Superior instruction. In 1904, however, it was resolved that instruction by religious congregations should be abolished within ten years. The State now reserves the right to confer University degrees and diplomas. Primary education was established on a triple foundation: it should be compulsory, gratuitous and

non-religious. Jules Ferry and Ferdinand Buisson are the principal founders of the present system of Primary Education. The teachers are paid from the national budget. Secondary Education is given in lycées, colleges and private establishments. The lycées are established, directed and supported by the State; the colleges are founded and maintained by the communes to prepare the pupils for the Baccalauréat which is required for entering the Faculties and the administrative careers. In Superior Education a good deal of autonomy is granted. There are special schools which, strictly speaking, are outside the ordinary University system. Thus there is the Collège de France, which was founded by François I, apart from the University. It administers itself under the authority of the Minister of Public Instruction. Its professors are appointed by the Government from a double list drawn up by the Institut de France and the Assembly of Professors of the Collège de France. The lectures are public, and are intended for highly educated hearers. The Catholic Institute, as Monsignor Ceretti remarked, is the true *continuateur* of the tradition of the original Sorbonne as founded by Abélard – a Theological School. In the École Normale are prepared the teachers of the Primary School, and in the École Normale Supérieure the professors of the lycées. In addition there are, for special purposes, a number of schools, such as the Museum of Natural History at the Jardin des Plantes. It is the oldest of these schools; it has acquired a "civil personality." It comprises laboratories, collections of geological, zoological and mineralogical specimens: it has twenty professorial chairs. The École Polytechnique is dependent on the Ministry of War; the students are in uniform and are subject to a military discipline. They obtain a scientific knowledge of engineering: the construction of bridges, embankments, the working of mines, docks, shipyards, etc. Officers of the Engineering and Artillery Corps are recruited from this establishment. The Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers is dependent on the Ministry of Commerce.

Its courses are gratuitous and are attended by artisans. Other schools dependent upon the Ministry of Public Instruction are the École des Chartes, a school of records for archivists and librarians; the École des Langues Orientales; the École Pratique des Hautes Études (historical and scientific research); the École des Beaux Arts; the École des Arts Décoratifs; the École de la Manufacture des Gobelins; the École de la Manufacture des Céramiques de Sèvres. At Rome there is the Villa Médicis for selected art students, and there are schools of local antiquities at Rome, Athens and Cairo. Under the Ministry of Agriculture there is the Collège de Grignon; the Collège d'Horticulture de Versailles; the Institut Agronomique de Paris, the National School of Forestry of Nancy, the Veterinary Colleges of Lyons, Alfort, Toulouse and other places. Under the Ministry of Commerce is the École Centrale des Arts et Manufactures, and various professional and commercial colleges. The Minister of Colonies controls the École Colonial and the Minister of Public Works the École des Mines and the École des Ponts et Chaussées. Saint-Cyr, under the War Ministry, is a military school which prepares officers for the Army. There is also the School of Applied Artillery and Engineering at Fontainebleau; a school for Cavalry at Saumur; the École de Service de Santé Militaire at Lyons; the École de Médecine et Pharmacie Militaire at the Val de Grâce at Paris. The Minister of Marine controls the Écoles Navales of Brest, Paris and Bordeaux.

*

It is necessary to refer to a striking development of post-War days. Technical Education has been taken in hand not merely in the engineering and other schools, but in the classes of schools in which manual trades are to be taught. It was M. Gaston Vidal who, after the War, was appointed to take charge of Technical Education. He realized the necessity for some expansion of the Primary Schools in this direction. He has done something to carry out his ideas, though it must be confessed

that a great deal remains to be done. He envisaged a sort of pre-apprenticeship of France's future workers. The interests of the economic life of the country demand the production of efficient workmen. It should not be represented that Technical Instruction is new in France, but the advance that had been made was insignificant. Out of a million French boys and girls arriving at the stage when they must choose a trade, fewer than 30,000 pursued their studies in professional schools. The proportion was regarded as extremely low, and M. Vidal gave a great stimulus to the movement. He showed by statistics that in the twenty years that preceded the War German exportations increased by 124 per cent., and Belgian exportations by 129 per cent., while French exportations increased by only 66 per cent. These results are largely due to the excellent technical training in Germany and Belgium. It is not possible in present circumstances to think of compelling all boys and girls who are to take up a manual trade to pass through professional schools, but there should certainly be a great extension of the practice.

Educationalists in France are agreed that attendance at the Primary Schools should be obligatory until the age of 14 – instead of 13 as at present. This prolongation of school life would permit the right development of the child who is not ready before the age of 14 to enter the workshop. Now the prolongation of the period spent in the Primary School means that the ordinary curriculum which is heavily charged can be somewhat lightened. More time can be devoted to certain kinds of organized sport. Moreover it is proposed that some first choice of trades should be made according to the indications of aptitude in the different categories The parents under the scheme which has been elaborated would be given information respecting the possible career of the schoolboy who does not intend to pursue the Secondary studies in the lycée. With the multiplication of the Technical schools – half-time or full-time – there should be a centralization of the demands of employers

and parents, the first offering to take apprentices, the second desirous of placing their children. Apprenticeship would be systematized. Not only practical training, but theoretical knowledge of trades would be given in the special schools, which would work in association with the Primary Schools, and scholarships and certificates would be awarded. It is hoped more and more to draw the personnel of the training schools from the various crafts. The Chambers of Commerce, the trade organizations and the unions of employers are asked to co-operate. At present it is possible to record that long strides have been taken in this direction, and this fact is significant of the new spirit in France which we can examine more closely when we deal with the economics of the post-War France.

*

The latest post-War figures of the number of students at the French Universities are as follows: Paris, 21,612; Lyons, 3,267; Bordeaux, 2,762; Toulouse, 2,663; Montpellier, 2,536; Grenoble, 2,510; Strasbourg, 2,488; Nancy, 1,908; Lille, 1,887; Aix-Marseilles, 1,698; Alger, 1,426; Rennes, 1,279; Poitiers, 1,022; Caen, 851; Dijon, 745; Clermont, 452; Besançon, 334. It is necessary to add to these figures 99 students at the École de Médecine de Reims; 86 at Amiens; 946 at Nantes; 215 at Limoges; and 126 at Rouen. Altogether it will be seen that the total is more than 50,000. They are divided into Facultés as follows: Law, 17,926; Medicine, 12,751; Sciences, 10,684; Letters, 8,299; Pharmacy, 1,058; Theology (Strasbourg), 218. These figures appear to be typical and are not likely to vary considerably for the next few years. If compared with the pre-War figures they offer no striking contrasts: the law students have increased slightly, and the science students have decreased, but, generally speaking, the attendance at the courses is about the same as in 1914. The number of girl students at the Universities has a tendency to increase. In the Paris University there are nearly 4,000 girl students. It may be reckoned that

there are more than 3,000 foreign students at the University.

The difficulties have been great. All over Europe the University student has had a hard time: the Paris University, like the German and the Austrian Universities, has been sorely tried. The phase through which we have passed – or are passing – was inevitable in countries with depreciated currencies. Not merely were laboratories working with totally inadequate equipment; not merely was the cost of new books and foreign magazines practically prohibitive for the majority of European students; not merely were professors and teachers so underpaid and so harassed by personal problems that they could neither do themselves nor their pupils justice, but in far too many cases the eager searcher after knowledge and technical training was actually undernourished, poorly and shabbily clothed, uncomfortably housed and forced by financial needs to do work outside his study hours. In the first place, the War created the New Poor in France – the Middle Class, which was fairly comfortable before the War, was badly hit. Any *rentes* it might have held represented for practical purposes only about a third of their former value, while the earnings of this class from which the intellectual professions were chiefly recruited, were far from keeping pace with the requirements. In the Quartier Latin, even if we set aside the pleasant fictions of Henri Murger, it was possible to live before the War on 200 francs a month. It now requires from 800 francs to 1,000 francs a month to keep a young man at the University in the capital. The entire expense of a full course of study for a degree – quite apart from board, lodging, clothing and other living expenses – is estimated to-day at 50,000 francs.

It is true that the provincial universities are doing excellent work, but Paris remains the goal of all young men who can possibly get there. Living in little hotels which formerly charged 25 francs a month, and now charge 250 francs a month for a tiny room, the lot of the poor student is hard, but the drain upon his

family is almost more than can be borne. Moreover, before the War the professional classes could anticipate, if not a life of material luxury, at least one free from carking care, and in addition they enjoyed the greatest respect. This was not an indifferent motive in building a life career. But now, so unhappy is the material lot of the majority of the intellectual classes, that the professions come to be looked upon more as an object of charity than of admiration. Think of the pitiful and scandalous standard of values implied in the accepted proposals that boxing matches should be permitted in order to provide funds for the colleges. The proletariat has succeeded not too badly in keeping up its standard of living: the profiteer and the industrialist have been amply able to look after themselves; it is the Middle Classes, and particularly those engaged in intellectual pursuits, who have had to endure the worst consequences of Europe's post-War disorganization. The wonder is that the younger generation still chose to follow its elders in the same life of privation without honour. Although the figures for the French universities which we have given do not register any falling off, they do not in themselves tell the whole tale. It by no means follows that the students who go through the courses intend afterwards to follow the profession for which they have apparently prepared. They are turning more and more to business concerns. As I write I have before me the following newspaper report: "The International Commission for Intellectual Co-operation, instituted by the Assembly of the League of Nations, has just met under the presidency of M. Henri Bergson. The Commission received several communications upon the intellectual situation in the world. The reports showed that intellectual culture is being more or less abandoned. M. Luchaire, who was charged with the direction of the inquiry in the Latin countries of Europe, reported on the crisis in pure Science, and he signalled a disquieting diminution of the love of disinterested work." This may be too gloomy a view to take and the condi-

tions have somewhat improved since the meeting of this International Commission, but nevertheless the report is substantially true.

Whatever may be the survival value to a nation of its intellectual élite, there can be no question that its cultural value can be measured almost completely in terms of the vigour and insight of a special class. Without Science and the Arts the life of a nation would be of little importance, whatever its accomplishments in other directions, and these are the contribution of a particular minority. The continuance of the search for knowledge and the cult of beauty cannot be broken even for a single generation without irreparable damage. It is therefore extremely unsatisfactory that a big proportion of the boys in the colleges should have been compelled to take up menial or unsuitable occupations. Some of the pupils at the Sorbonne play instruments in the orchestras of the night restaurants. Investigation shows that 70 per cent. of the law students are clerks, advertising agents, commercial travellers, even night porters at *Les Halles*. It is rapidly becoming the rule and not the exception to have to earn a living during the period of studies. There exists a University Association which has made it its business to find jobs for its members. One can hardly pretend that the ordinary student of to-day can, in these circumstances, devote sufficient attention to his cultural formation, or that after his school days he will pursue his profession if he can find more profitable outlets for his energies.

In Paris, too, the equipment of the schools became obsolete. At the Museum some of the microscopes were thirty years old. Americans – and American women above all – must be aware of what their generosity meant to Madame Curie, and how without their splendidly spontaneous help she would never have been able to continue her higher researches into the therapeutic values of radium. Branly, one of the most disinterested of the scientific workers in France, and many others who devoted

themselves to research, were hampered by poverty. It was not easy to obtain funds from the harassed Government which had its budgetary difficulties; but in 1924 an additional fourteen million francs was put at the disposition of the University to help in the reconstitution of the equipment and to aid the less fortunate students. The Académie des Sciences was given the delicate task of distributing this money. Further, at the beginning of 1925 the hope was held out that Germany would deliver scientific instruments and other scholastic necessities to the value of twenty million francs. A number of Co-operative Purchasing Bureaux were organized in which clothes and other supplies could be bought at the lowest possible prices. Students' restaurants were set up, and the building of a university *Cité* in which accommodation could be obtained not only by French but by foreign students, was begun on the outskirts of Paris.

Loans of honour were instituted. The experience of other countries, especially the United States, has shown these loans of honour to be practicable and not a waste of resources. Scholarships for the lycées and colleges were given fairly freely in France, but after the age of eighteen the student had hitherto been left pretty much to himself. But after a hard political struggle in the Chamber of Deputies, the *prêt d'honneur* was voted by which money might be advanced to the students on the understanding that it should be paid back without interest within ten years of the date on which the beneficiary received his diploma. The loans are to individuals and not for the purpose of subsidizing any particular institution. Morally the loan has a good effect on the student himself, since it teaches him that what society has given must be returned. Financially the capital advanced does not disappear but is retrievable, and the fund, after the initial outlay, replenishes itself like the widow's cruse. In every respect this plan appears to be better than the scholarship system, where the money is given outright and the student is under no obligation whatsoever. The State began

with the comparatively small sum of two million francs, but there is little doubt that this will be considerably added to in the future by private contributions to the Student Fund. Private legacies to be administered by one or other of the French institutions are frequent in France. There is therefore every reason to believe that the situation will, within a few years, right itself.

One difficulty which was not peculiar to France was the impossibility for ideas to circulate among the nations as freely as before the War. Professors and students in Europe considered themselves lucky if they could buy books and magazines in their own language. Even the libraries and universities could not afford to keep up their subscriptions to foreign technical magazines. The average French book costs between 7 francs and 15 francs. Similar books published in England or in America might cost from 40 francs to 80 francs – a prohibitive price. Now it is necessary that the intellectual winds should blow freely from the English-speaking countries to the Latin countries. It is altogether bad that the younger generation in Europe should be locked up within the confines of its own language. The things of the mind know – or should know – no frontier, and it is precisely during the generous years of youth, during the normal period of a young man's college work, that he is most susceptible to the influences which make for understanding of, and sympathy towards, foreign countries. At this time in European history when, as never before, improved communication facilities have brought the peoples nearer together, when the invisible wireless telephone waves can travel from continent to continent, and when the nations need some spiritual nexus to bind them together in a communalty of interests, it is imperative that the students and the intellectuals should not be isolated from each other.

Happily there is to be observed at the Paris University a growing sense of international solidarity. Dr. Appell, and indeed the

majority of the professors have quite frankly ranged themselves on the side of all international movements. They have encouraged, in spite of the material obstacles, an interchange of views. Nowhere in France is the idea embodied in the League of Nations so strong as in the University. It takes many forms: there has been set up in Paris an International Intellectual Institute; the University sends a delegation to Geneva for the Assembly of the League; there are conferences of students representing many different nationalities to consider how they might help each other and promote the cause of European peace. At the same time the Minister of Public Instruction is at the head of a French Association of Artistic Expansion and Exchanges whose object is to carry beyond the French frontiers the art of France in all its forms, and endeavour to make better known to the French public the arts of foreign countries. Already its activities have been extensive and intensive. In a variety of ways France is taking the lead in the sphere of intellectual co-operation. A genuine attempt to break down all insularity, especially in the educational domain, and to bring together the élite of all countries, has its headquarters in Paris. Nowhere is the belief in interdependence and in solidarity fostered as in the Paris University. When the American Professor Barrett Wendell wrote a book some years before the War, on France, he made some strictures on the lack of cordiality among the French educationalists. "The qualities of humanity which are to be found in the American Universities," he said, "seem to be absolutely lacking in French University life." But to-day he would receive a different impression. The Paris University is seeking to become the true centre of the world's intellectual activities.

BOOK II

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC

Chapter I

THE CONSTITUTION

In order to understand the political problems of France to-day some brief account must be given of the Constitution of the country. Since September 4, 1870, the form of government in France has been Republican. But although there have been political changes frequently registered for a century and more, the basis of French organization has remained substantially the same since the days of Napoleon I. In the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789 we read: "The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the Nation. No Assembly and no person can exercise authority which does not emanate directly from the Nation." The present legislative machinery dates from 1875, when the Constitution was framed at Versailles. Twice have amendments of details been made. These Constitutional Laws were admittedly incomplete, and there is at recurrent intervals much talk of a revision of the Constitution. Notably is this necessary in the opinion of men like M. Millerand in the direction of a strengthening of Presidential powers. But it is unlikely that a modification in this sense will be effected. For fifty years France has, in spite of severe trials, managed to get along fairly comfortably with the Constitution voted by the Versailles Assembly. France in the past has suffered greatly from coups d'état and from attempts to secure personal power. Whenever any individual appears to grow too strong there is always a violent reaction against him. The authority of the President of the Republic, who is elected for seven years by the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies meeting together in a National Assembly, is jealousy restricted. There is always some suspicion that the present Constitution was drawn up by men who were, many of them, at heart faithful to the Empire which foundered in the defeat and humiliation of 1870, or were secretly inclined to Monarchism. This it might be thought is a reason for carefully reconsidering the laws, but it is felt that

there is danger in touching them at all. Therefore, the Parliament and people content themselves with watching for any deviation from the laws on the part of the President, and with occasionally throwing down a politician whom they have placed upon a pedestal for no other reason than that he begins dangerously to resemble a dictator.

Since the War we have seen two men – one of them a Prime Minister, the other a President – utterly cast down because they were too powerful. There was first M. Georges Clemenceau, regarded, and rightly regarded, as the man who had saved France from collapse and had infused a new spirit into the Army and into the people at a particularly critical moment of the War. He was the hero of the nation, and when, at the beginning of 1920, he should normally have been made President of the Republic on the retirement of M. Poincaré, the politicians looked inquiringly at each other, whispered that M. Clemenceau with all his qualities was arbitrary and uncontrollable, and suddenly decided that such a man, popular and self-willed, could not be trusted in the post of President. He was, to his bitter disappointment, driven out of public life at the very hour of his triumph. Still another example of the abhorrence of the French for any man who endeavours to exercise an excessive authority has been furnished by the dismissal of M. Millerand from the Presidency. M. Millerand succeeded M. Deschanel, who was elected instead of M. Clemenceau, in 1920, to the Elysée, but who was soon obliged to resign on account of ill-health. M. Millerand, too, had been popular, chiefly because by despatching at precisely the right moment General Weygand to the assistance of the Poles he had checked the Bolshevik drive on Warsaw. But M. Millerand unwisely advocated an extension of Presidential powers. He complained that the Constitution did not give him a free enough hand. He wanted, like an American President, to dictate the policy of his country. He constantly harped on the need for continuity. This was all very well while the Bloc

National, of which he had been the leader, remained in office; but in publicly suggesting that whatever the result of the Elections of May 11, 1924, might be, his own policy should not be disturbed, he sealed his own doom. When the Bloc National was beaten at the polls and the Bloc des Gauches, which held different views, obtained the majority in the Chamber, it was immediately resolved that M. Millerand, with his personal conceptions of power and policy, must be replaced. It was not difficult to force him to resign. The majority had only to refuse to form a government until after his departure, to organize as it were a strike of ministers, to render M. Millerand helpless. He could, with the consent of the Senate, have called for new elections, or he could have arranged for the adjournment of Parliament. But either of these courses would have been audacious – a challenge to the electors. He did not dare take such an extreme step, which would have aroused public anger, and he was obliged to quit the Elysée without more ado. Thereupon the Bloc des Gauches elected as President on June 13, 1924, a safe man who would have no pretensions to be other than a figurehead – M. Doumergue.

These examples alone would suffice to show how fearful the French are of placing their destinies in the hands of any strong-willed person who cannot be overthrown by a simple parliamentary vote. The President of the Republic cannot communicate with Parliament except by messages countersigned by a Minister. He is regarded as a sort of arbiter; he must not show any party discrimination; his business, as has been emphatically said, is merely to preside. It is true that he may choose the Prime Minister – or rather, to use the French expression, the Président du Conseil – and he is present at the Ministerial Councils and of course is entitled to express his opinion, which carries more or less weight according to his personal prestige and the nature of his relations with the Ministers. But in choosing a Prime Minister he must listen to the advice of the Presi-

dent of the Senate, who is the second person of the Republic, and of the President of the Chamber, who is the third person of the Republic. Both these presidents, whatever may be their party predilections, aim at impartiality.

It is possible for a President to continue in office even when his convictions are different from those of the Prime Minister. He may make his private protest and wash his hands of responsibility. Indeed, M. Poincaré, when he was President, considered it his duty to accept decisions of M. Clemenceau of which he disapproved. The theory of Presidential irresponsibility has been laid down clearly. On the whole, French Presidents have been somewhat unfortunate. The first President was Adolphe Thiers – from 1871 to 1873. The second was Marshal MacMahon – 1873 to 1879 – who was forced to resign because he came in conflict with Parliament. The third was Jules Grévy (1879–1885, and again to 1887), who was broken in consequence of a scandal concerning the sale of honours. Then came Sadi Carnot (1887–1894), who was assassinated. Casimir Périer found the post an impossible one for him, and only stayed from June 1894 to January 1895, when he resigned. The sudden death of Félix Faure in 1899 brought his presidency prematurely to an end. Then followed three Presidents who appear to have had the right conception of their duties, and who served their full term of office – Emile Loubet (1899–1906), Armand Fallières (1906-1913), Raymond Poincaré (1913–1920). The period of their presidencies was exceedingly troubled by the Dreyfus controversy, by the anti-clerical agitation and by the Great War, but at least these three managed to survive the vicissitudes of two decades because they did not try to escape from the written and unwritten laws which restrict their powers. Presidential misfortune began again, however, with Paul Deschanel and Alexandre Millerand.

*

Nominally the President is a highly important personage, but

in reality the Prime Minister is supreme. The career of a Prime Minister is, however, usually brief. French ministries come and go quickly. They start well enough, but they are soon, as the French say *usé*. The instability of French governments has grave disadvantages. To carry on for a whole year is regarded as a fairly good record. With the knowledge that ministries must be of short duration, it is inevitable that a spirit which has been expressed in the phrase *après nous le déluge!* should prevail. There is always a muddle forthe succeeding government to clear up. Often the new government does tackle the difficulties with some success, but it then flounders into other difficulties and the cumulative effect, especially in the domain of public finances, is sometimes deplorable. It is interesting to examine the records of the French governments since 1890. They are as follows:

Premier	Date when Ministry was Formed	Duration
M. de Freycinet	March 17, 1890	23 months 18 days
M. Loubet	Feb. 27, 1892	9 „ 7 „
M. Ribot	Dec. 6, 1892	37 „
„	Jan. 12, 1893	2 „ 23 „
M. Charles Dupuy	April 4, 1893	7 „ 29 „
M. Casimir Périer	Dec. 3, 1893	5 „ 27 „
M. Charles Dupuy	May 30, 1894	4 „ 26 „
M. Ribot	Jan. 27, 1895	9 „ 6 „
M. Léon Bourgeois	Nov. 2, 1895	7 „ 26 „
„ „	March 28, 1896	32 „
M. Méline	April 29, 1896	2 years 2 months
M. Brisson	June 28, 1898	4 months 5 days
M. Charles Dupuy	Nov. 3, 1898	7 „ 20 „
M. Waldeck Rousseau	June 23, 1899	3 years
M. Combes	June 7, 1902	2 years 7 months
M. Maurice Rouvier	Jan. 24, 1905	13 „
M. Sarrien	March 14, 1906	7 months 12 days

Premier	Date when Ministry was Formed	Duration
M. Clemenceau	Oct. 26, 1906	2 years 9 months
M. Aristide Briand	July 25, 1909	1 year 4 months
„ „	Dec. 3, 1910	3 „
M. Ernest Monis	March 3, 1911	3 months 23 days
M. Caillaux	June 26, 1911	6 „ 19 „
M. Poincaré	Jan. 15, 1912	12 „
M. Aristide Briand	Jan. 12, 1913	2 „
M. Barthou	March 21, 1913	8 „
M. Doumergue	Dec. 9, 1913	6 „
M. Ribot	June 10, 1914	3 days
M. René Viviani	June 13, 1914	75 „
„ „	Aug. 27, 1914	14 months
M. Aristide Briand	Oct. 13, 1915	13 „
„ „	Dec. 14, 1916	3 „
M. Ribot	March 20, 1917	6 „
M. Paul Painlevé	Sept. 13, 1917	2 „
M. Clemenceau	Nov. 17, 1917	2 years 2 months

In the post-War parliaments the record has been similar. M. Millerand was Prime Minister for less than a year, M. Leygues for a few months only, and M. Briand for a year. M. Poincaré, who remained in office – though he offered his resignation once and reconstructed his Cabinet – from the beginning of 1922 until after the Elections in the middle of 1924, is to be numbered amongst the long-lived Prime Ministers. M. François Marsal, who succeeded him merely for the purpose of carrying a Presidential message to Parliament, lasted a few days only before making way for M. Edouard Herriot. The average, it will be seen, is about ten months for each Ministry. Constant changes of this kind cannot be good for any country. It might be thought that they strengthen the hand of the President, who can at any rate normally count on remaining in office for his

septennate. If the President is supple, and is careful not to oppose directly the Prime Minister, doubtless he does obtain substantially his own way in general policy.

*

France is divided legally not into provinces but into départements. The old provinces persist, but officially are no part of the administrative machinery. Since the return of Alsace and of Lorraine to France, the French territory is divided into ninety départements which in their turn are divided into 385 arrondissements. An arrondissement comprises a number of cantons. There are 3,019 cantons in France. These cantons are subdivided into 37,963 communes. In each département there is a Prefect assisted by a General Secretary. Both these functionaries are nominated by the President of the Republic – on the proposition of the Minister of the Interior – and have extensive powers. The Prefect is the direct representative of the Central Government. He may intervene in debates in the Conseil Général of his département, and should forbid a vote on political questions. In point of fact he allows the Conseil Général to pass congratulatory motions to the Government of the day. He prepares the departmental budget. He is charged with the whole work of administration. On his own territory he is supreme. In each arrondissement there is an Under Prefect and a Conseil d'Arrondissement. In each canton there is a juge de paix. In each commune there is a mayor and a municipal council. A distinguished French statesman once remarked to me that whatever was the ostensible cause of a change of government, the real cause was always dissatisfaction with the prefectorial appointments, or the refusal of the government to replace prefects. As with all generalizations this remark is only partly true, but it does serve to indicate the extreme importance of the prefectorial system. It is believed that the Prefect can control the whole political activities of the district assigned to

him. The Conseil de Préfecture is an administrative tribunal. The Conseil Général is a popularly elected body which can hardly depart from its routine round of duties. The councillors are elected for six years. There are elections of half the Council every three years. The Conseil d'Arrondissement is also popularly elected in the same manner. Its task must also be regarded as administrative and it must proceed according to laws which leave it little freedom. The Conseil Municipal, is composed of members elected for four years. It can be dissolved or suspended by prefectorial decree, and the Prefect can nominate in its place a delegation. Paris is an exceptional unit. It is divided into twenty arrondissements, each with its mayor and council. For the whole city there is a general Conseil Municipal of which there is a president, but as is often complained, there is no Lord Mayor or Governor as there would be in an English or an American city. Paris has two prefects – the Prefect of Police and the Prefect of the Seine in which département it stands.

Government is in the hands of three powers: there is the Executive power, consisting of the President, the Ministers and the local administrators; there is the Legislative power, exercised by two assemblies, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies; there is the Judiciary power, which, though an emanation of the Executive power, in theory is entirely independent. The separation of powers is a phrase which is often heard, but there is necessarily an interlocking. In the administration of the country the Conseil d'État fulfils an important rôle. Most of its members are permanent officials. It is the legal adviser of the Government. It interprets the laws. It has, properly speaking, no initiative, but nevertheless in certain circumstances it may overrule the decisions of all other bodies. In some cases the President or the Ministers are obliged to consult it in virtue of existing laws. In other cases the Government in search of enlightenment, or desirous of covering itself by the advice of

the Conseil, may voluntarily appeal to it. It is a supreme tribunal of administrative jurisdiction. It is presided over by the Garde des Sceaux – the Minister of Justice – and is divided into six sections.

THE electoral method of the scrutin de liste which, in 1919, replaced the scrutin d'arrondissement, produces curious results. In the General Elections for the Chamber of Deputies in 1919 the parties which grouped themselves together under the title of Bloc National were favoured by this so-called method of Proportional Representation. In 1924 the Bloc des Gauches – that is to say the union of Radicals and Socialists – was in its turn given a somewhat unfair advantage. France hesitates between the single-member constituency and the multiple-member constituency. It is possible that the next Elections will see the restoration of the straight fight for single-member seats; but as two of the most important General Elections held since the War have been fought on the basis of multiple-member constituencies and bogus proportionalism, it is necessary to examine the working of the law of July 12, 1919.

The département forms the electoral area, but those départements which have more than six deputies may be divided into two or more electoral areas. Each area has the right to a deputy for every 75,000 inhabitants. If there remains a balance of more than 37,500 inhabitants an additional deputy is allowed. No département may have less than three deputies. The various lists of candidates who propose to run together must, according to the amendment of 1923, be complete. There may be any number of lists in presence. Every candidate who receives an incontestable majority, that is to say more than half the suffrages, is declared elected without more ado. Thus if six candidates of one group obtain the narrowest absolute majority, they are proclaimed deputies without question and the principle of Proportional Representation is utterly ignored. Generally, as there are several lists, the votes will be so divided that the absolute majority will not be attained. Then will commence the compli-

cated arithmetical business of awarding the seats, and as can easily be shown by a few simple figures, the leading list will always have a disproportionate representation. First, what is called the electoral quotient has to be determined. The quotient is arrived at by dividing the number of voters by the number of deputies to be elected. Thus if there are 100,000 voters and five seats, the quotient is 20,000. Then each list is taken, and the average number of votes for the candidates on that list is ascertained. The whole of the suffrages expressed for the Blues is divided by the number of candidates that the Blues have put in the field. The quotient is compared with the average. If the average is double the quotient two seats go to the Blues. No notice is taken of odd figures however large they may be. If the average falls short of the quotient by a single vote, then the list receives no seats. Naturally the seats are allotted to the leaders of the list. It should be noted that if one or more of the candidates on a list has personally obtained an absolute majority, the votes cast for them are nevertheless added to the votes cast for their colleagues in order to fix the average. Therefore that list starts with a clear gain. Some candidates are elected in the first instance, but nevertheless help their party to carry other seats. It may well be that after these operations the whole of the seats are not filled. The quotient may just fail to go into the various averages a sufficient number of times. Suppose there is one seat left over, it is then attributed to the list which has the strongest average. Thus everything is in favour of the leading list. The case is also foreseen of the division of the averages by the quotient giving more seats than actually exist. In this event, which may happen when one or more seats have been won by an absolute majority, the candidates with the largest number of votes are declared elected.

Assume that there are 75,000 voters, five seats and three lists of five candidates. The quotient is 15,000. The average of the first list is 35,740, of the second 25,840, and of the third 13,420.

The quotient goes into the first average twice, into the second once and into the third not at all. Therefore the first list takes two seats, the second one, the third none. There are still two seats vacant. Under the 1919 law they would be attributed to the list of the strongest average, that is the first list. Now obviously the first list has not obtained four times as many votes as the second list. It has not even obtained four times as many as the third list. It has not even obtained twice as many as the second list. And yet the seats are distributed in the disproportion of four, one, none. If it is suggested that Proportional Representation has been tried and found wanting in France, these facts will sufficiently show that the French law has no relation whatever to true Proportional Representation.

In France since 1848 there has been Universal Suffrage – that is to say for men. The right to vote in the Municipal and Legislative Elections belongs to every Frenchman born or naturalized, who has reached the age of 21, and who has not incurred a penal condemnation, become bankrupt, or been declared insane. It is necessary, however, to be inscribed upon the Electoral List, and therefore to have a domicile in a particular commune.

*

The number of members of the Chamber of Deputies has varied considerably from time to time. In the 1919 Parliament there were 626 seats. In the 1924 Parliament there were only 584. This is due to the operation of the provisions of the law giving one deputy for every 75,000 inhabitants. Every time there is a census of the population the number of seats is liable to variation.

During the session no deputy can be arrested or prosecuted except with the authorization of the Chamber. This immunity is intended to preserve the nation's representatives from vexatious and arbitrary prosecution; but if a genuine case can be shown against a deputy, a Commission of the House will, after

inquiring into the circumstances, recommend that the immunity be raised and the Chamber will thereupon vote. In recent years this immunity has been raised somewhat lightly. A bad example was set when proceedings of a political character were taken against M. Caillaux. The Chamber, in spite of his eloquent defence, authorized the proceedings, and M. Caillaux, after two years of imprisonment, was eventually tried by the Senate sitting as a High Court of Justice. M. Malvy consented to go before the Senate to be tried for political offences. A number of other deputies were molested, including M. Marcel Cachin, the leader of the Communists in the Chamber. This was under the Poincaré Ministry, which nearly fell when the Senate declined even to hear the flimsy case elaborated against him. The subservience of the Chamber in the years which immediately followed the War was never better illustrated than by its readiness to surrender the privileges of a member at the bidding of the Government.

The deputies, who are normally elected in the month of May for a period of four years, receive a salary of 15,000 francs a year. This is supplemented by a special monthly allowance of 1,000 francs. In 1924 the Elections, according to the Minister of the Interior, gave 20 seats to the Conservateurs, 117 to the Entente Républicaine, 130 to the Républicains de Gauche and Gauches Démocratiques, who may be regarded as constituting the Right. The Radicals and Radical Socialists obtained 139 seats, the Republican Socialists 36, the Socialists properly so called 102, and the Communists 29. Eleven other seats went to independent deputies. Once elected, the members sort themselves out, and form groups for parliamentary purposes. If this is borne in mind, it will be understood that the discrepancy between the official results just given and the list that follows of the groups as they are actually inscribed in the Chamber, is more apparent than real. The Gauche Républicaine Démocratique has 43 members as against 89 in the 1919 Parliament. The Républi-

cains de Gauche number 38 as against 56. The Republican Democrats are 14 strong. The Union Républicaine Démocratique (formerly the Entente Républicaine) has 104 members as against 170. Conservateurs and Independents and others count 30. It will be observed that even parties of the Right, or at least of the Centre, delight in calling themselves Republicans and Democrats, and in claiming to belong to the Left. The Gauche Radicale is a new organization of 40 members. It casts in its lot with the Radical-Socialists, who have grown from 82 in 1919 to 139; and with the Republican-Socialists, who have increased from 32 to 43; and with the Socialists, who were formerly 50, but after the 1924 Elections became 104. The Communists are a compact little group of 26 as against 13 in the previous Parliament. The Communists cannot be reckoned on the side of the Radicals and Socialists, but it is plain from these figures that if the various kinds of Radicals and Socialists could stick together, they would have a sufficiently large working majority to dominate the Chamber until 1928. But to assume this would be to ignore the fluidity of the group system in the French Chamber.

France, like most of the European countries, has evolved a parliamentary system which differs entirely from the British and American systems. In the English-speaking countries it may be broadly declared there are two parties. Sometimes a third emerges and produces complications, but generally the parties are sufficiently clear in their composition and in their programmes, above all in their complexion and temperament, to make the choice of the elector comparatively easy. There is little chance of Liberals or Labour men being confounded with Conservatives, or men elected as Democrats working with the Republicans. The demarcation is simple. In France, on the contrary, the delimitation of parties is almost impossible. The groups shade off into each other. One is obliged to describe politicians vaguely as " men of the Left " or " men of the

Right," and in the same parliament a Prime Minister of the Left or a Prime Minister of the Right may be equally acceptable. Thus in the 1919 Parliament, which was taken to be a purely Nationalist Parliament, there were as Prime Ministers M. Millerand, man of the Right, and M. Briand, man of the Left. Such an alternation would be incredible in the English-speaking countries. One cannot imagine – for example – a Conservative majority asking Mr. Ramsay Macdonald to be Prime Minister instead of Mr. Baldwin. But in France the divisions are so shadowy that anything may happen. The Gauche Radicale is generally regarded as an auxiliary of the Radicals and Socialists. It might well, however, were the occasion to arise, support even a Poincaré government. The Gauche Républicaine and the Républicains de Gauche and the Republican Democrats cannot possibly be described in terms that would bring out their differences. At election times a score of parties publish manifestoes. With certain exceptions, I would guarantee to shuffle these manifestoes in such a manner that the members of the groups would be unable to discover the substitution. In Parliament itself these groups dwindle down to ten, but even with ten groups the possible combinations, like the combinations of cards, are infinite.

This having been said, however, a certain crystallization on the Left and on the Right is to be noted. The groups come to working agreements and become "blocs." In one parliament there is a Bloc National formed of diverse elements. In another parliament there is a Bloc des Gauches formed of elements which could hardly, one would have thought, have managed to mix. The Socialists properly so called (for the addition of the word Socialist to their name means very little in the case of the Radical-Socialists and the Republican-Socialists) should according to their doctrines oppose the Bourgeois parties. They should decline, if they were true to their principles, to vote for a Bourgeois budget. They should be uncompromising. But for

the purpose of the 1924 Elections they decided to enter into a cartel with the bourgeois reformist parties known as the Radical-Socialists and the Republican-Socialists. They realized that if they fought against each other they would cut each other's throats to the profit of the Bloc National. Now this Cartel des Gauches, which was intended to last only during the electoral period, was converted in the Chamber into a Bloc des Gauches. It happened to suit the political purpose both of the Bourgeois parties and the anti-Bourgeois parties to form such an alliance. The Socialists found plenty of ingenious justification for the temporary abandonment of their principles. There were even some Socialists who were prepared not only to vote for the Budget, not only to support a Radical Government, but to enter the Radical Government as Ministers. The majority of Socialists considered that collaboration as distinct from support would be too complete a departure from doctrine. There was much comic discussion about the precise meaning of the words collaboration, support, and pressure. Eventually it was the middle term which was chosen, but in the minds of most Socialists, Socialist support for the Radicals implies pressure; it implies that the Socialists will vote with the Radicals as long as the Radicals reasonably march at the bidding of the Socialists.

A common programme was found in which figured the suppression of the Embassy at the Vatican and the enforcement of anti-clerical laws, the insistence upon the secularization of the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish schools in the recovered provinces of Alsace-Lorraine, the reduction of the period of compulsory military service, the imposition of further direct taxation and of less indirect taxation, social reforms of various kinds, and so forth. On such a platform Radicals and Socialists could present a united front to the groups which were dominated by the Union Républicaine – the former Entente Républicaine – that is to say, the principal party of the Bloc National. The

Radicals and the Socialists together also stood for friendlier relations with Germany, and there were those who looked for a Franco-German alliance which would constitute the beginnings of what is known as a Continental Bloc. On Russia, too, they were agreed, holding that recognition of the Soviet regime was necessary. The Communists, it should be observed, belonging to the Third International and taking their orders from Moscow, would have nothing to do with either Socialists or Radicals, fighting them bitterly as Bourgeois parties – the Radicals being Bourgeois by definition and the Socialists by surrender.

But it was always possible to foresee that if the Chamber was sufficiently frightened by a German menace, or by a Russian menace of Communism, or by a financial or social crisis, the Bloc would fall asunder and there would be a new combination, a great coalition, a Centre Party including most of the groups opposed to the Bloc des Gauches and the Radicals themselves, and putting into opposition the Socialists, the Communists and the men of the extreme Right. With the group system almost any arrangement is possible, no matter what may be the ostensible majority on one side or the other. That is why men who always take a somewhat ambiguous attitude (such as M. Briand) and are neither wholly with the Left nor wholly with the Right, but are prepared to swing in either direction, are so eminently successful in French politics. In almost any kind of Parliament their time may ultimately come, for the Chamber cannot be dissolved except in the event of grave disaccord between the Executive power and the Legislative power. The President, to dissolve the Chamber, must obtain the consent of the Senate. He would naturally hesitate to take such a course, and the Senate is not willing lightly to enter into a conflict with the Chamber. Thus there may be Ministerial crises, the majority may change sides as a result of fresh group combinations, and Governments of different colours may succeed each other with-

out the duration of the life of the Chamber being put in jeopardy.

*

Parliament usually holds two sessions every year. The ordinary session begins the second Tuesday of January and must last at least five months. The extraordinary session from the end of October to the end of December is not obligatory, but in fact the necessities of legislative work always compel Parliament to hold this second session. The financial year begins in January, and Parliament should pass the Budgetary Bill for the ensuing year before the end of December. In fact Parliament seldom if ever votes the Budget punctually; there is always the most prolonged discussion lasting for months. The result is that Parliament hastily votes *douzièmes provisoires* – temporary monthly credits.

The colour line is not drawn in France. Entering the Chamber the stranger may be startled to see black Deputies sitting in their places. They are on the most friendly terms with their white colleagues. They represent the older French colonies. Algeria has six Deputies, and there are ten from other French settlements. The French view is that the colonies must be regarded as forming part of the mother country. They are, in the French phrase, assimilated, therefore they are entitled to send their direct representatives to Parliament.

The Chamber is circular. The groups sit to the left, in the centre, or to the right, in accordance with the degree of their Radicalism or Conservatism. On the extreme left are the Communists, and on the extreme right Conservatives, Catholics and Royalists. The Government occupies the front benches. The public is admitted to the debates. Special parts of the galleries are allotted to diplomatists and to the Press men, who are allowed to publish reports of the proceedings without any restriction. There is issued a fairly full official account of the speeches almost as soon as they are uttered. An expert staff of

shorthand writers is constantly at work, and sheet by sheet the typewritten transcription is posted up in the Salle des Pas Perdus. These speeches are made not by the Deputies standing in their places, but from a great tribune, pulpit-like in appearance, from which the Deputy can face the whole house. Behind him sits the President of the Chamber, according to the French custom of ceremonious persons on ceremonious occasions, in evening dress. By his side is a big loud-sounding bell which he is frequently obliged to ring. The discussions in the Chamber are often noisy. I have witnessed many wild scenes. The members appear to delight in banging the lids of their desks, and sometimes the banging and shouting and even fisticuffs oblige the President to put on his hat and walk out, thus suspending the sitting. Since the War the Deputies certainly seem to have exercised less control over themselves. The late M. Deschanel, before he was made President of the Republic, was an ideal President of the Chamber. M. Raoul Péret was too excitable. Nor was M. Paul Painlevé a complete success in this exceedingly difficult post.

The Deputies vote in their places. They have a supply of white and blue papers signifying for or against, and they drop them into an urn which is brought round by the ushers. M. Poincaré has properly called attention to the need for introducing into France the British system of permitting questions to be asked of Ministers without giving rise to debate. Instead, interpellations are frequent and they mean lengthy discussions.

The machinery of election may be complicated, but in France it is easier for a candidate to put himself forward than in most countries. The absence of parties means that he has not necessarily to submit himself to local and to central committees. In some cases, would-be candidates or groups of candidates are responsible to nobody. As long as a Frenchman is twenty-five years of age, and is not in the army or navy, or in certain departments of Government service, he is entitled to present himself

at the polls, and the electoral expenses may be insignificant. This makes for the multiplicity of candidates. Whether the list system or the uninominal system is in operation, there are always many fantastic candidatures. There has been some scandal concerning electoral funds which an association of business men, known as the Union des Intérêts Economiques, distributed to candidates who would adopt their programme. It would be absurd to say that money does not count in French elections, but nevertheless I believe that the poor man has a great chance of being successful. A good proportion of the French Deputies are men to whom the parliamentary salary means much. They live upon it, and if they are beaten at a subsequent election they cheerfully go back to their ordinary labours. I have known workers of all kinds democratically serving in the Palais Bourbon for four years, and at the end of the four years philosophically returning to their task of breaking stones or making furniture.

The Commissions play a much more important part in the life of the French Parliament than in other parliaments. They are all powerful. Bills are worked upon by these Commissions who decide, in agreement with the Government, in what form they shall be presented to the House. They often seriously amend the projects which are submitted to them. It is rarely that the Government takes the risk of coming into conflict with the Commissions. The Government has need of the assistance of the Commissions in piloting a Bill through Parliament. There is a rapporteur nominated in each Commission who draws up a report, making whatever observations seem to be called for, and often examining the whole question at issue at great length in a document that has real value. The reports on the Versailles Treaty, for which ratification had to be asked from Parliament, are, for example, admirable works which were afterwards published in book form. The reports on the Finance Bill are usually the most able documents. The Rapporteur may, in short, know

a good deal more about his subject than the Minister. Whatever the Commission decides is usually accepted by the Chamber. The Commissions are in most cases fully representative of all parties, and are, as it were, a microcosm of the Chamber.

Frequently have I seen the Rapporteur, and sometimes the President of a Commission, carry a Bill in the Chamber – almost taking the whole task out of the hands of the Government. From time to time a Government representative would briefly signify his approval, but the representative of the Commission would be the man who was constantly on his feet, explaining, arguing, appealing. The Commissions are bodies which at all times may request the Prime Minister, or any particular Minister whom they wish to hear, to appear before them and furnish them with information. Rarely do the Ministers refuse such an invitation. They realize that they are dependent upon the goodwill of the Commissions, that their task is singularly facilitated if they have the support of the Commissions, and rendered almost impossible if they are opposed by the Commissions. The most secret matters were revealed in Commission as a matter of course during the War and during the peace-making, on the understanding that the members would treat the information as confidential. The Communists have introduced a new complication by declining to observe these Ministerial confidences. There is a Commission for the Army, for the Navy, for Agriculture, for Railways, for Customs, and so forth, but it is generally acknowledged that the principal Commissions are the Commission of Finance and the Commission of Foreign Affairs. They may have a determining influence over the Government.

Ministers are entitled to sit in accordance with Parliamentary needs in either House. A Senator is not confined to the Senate if he has a Ministerial post, nor a Deputy to the Chamber. Nor is it necessary that a Minister should have been elected to either House. When General Nollet, for example, was appointed War Minister, he was chosen from outside Parliament. There was no

question of his presenting himself for election. As a Minister and not as a Deputy or Senator he took his seat on the front benches. The Prime Minister does not, as in England, stand aloof from all Departments; he goes to whatever Ministerial Department he may choose. The Ministry of Justice is normally considered to be the highest post, and the Minister is Vice-President of the Council – that is to say Deputy Prime Minister. During the War there were Prime Ministers who chose to be their own War Ministers. Since the War Prime Ministers have chosen to be their own Ministers of Foreign Affairs. It is to be expected that in the future Prime Ministers will choose to be their own Finance Ministers. In short, the Prime Minister assigns to himself, in addition to his general duties, some definite duty, and that duty is the one which he regards as the most important at that moment.

*

No one in France can be a Senator unless he has passed his fortieth birthday. The Senate is intended to be an older, wiser, calmer and more dispassionate body than the Chamber. Its general duty is to reconsider the decisions of the Chamber and pronounce upon them, not indeed without a certain amount of party feeling, but at any rate in as impartial a spirit as is possible. The Senate is not directly elected by the French citizens but by restricted electoral colleges. It thus tends to become an assembly of moderate men. Speaking broadly, it is only the man who to some extent represents all parties who is likely to be chosen. The Senators have, of course, party labels, but they mean much less than party labels mean in the Chamber.

Since the war the last of the Life-Senators has disappeared. There were originally seventy-five permanent Senators appointed in 1875 by the National Assembly. Obviously the Life-Senator was an anomaly in an assembly which is for the most part an emanation of the local councils. As the Life-Senators died out they were not renewed. During the early years of the

Republic they fulfilled a useful purpose. They gave stability to the Senate; they were respected as the Fathers of the Republic. But afterwards they became a simple anachronism, a relic of Empire, consular persons who had lost their power. Their final extinction in 1920 was not regretted.

To the 300 members who have composed the Senate since 1875 until 1920 there are now added fourteen representatives of Alsace and of Lorraine; there are five Senators from Bas Rhin, four from Haut Rhin, and five from Moselle. The Senate, therefore, now comprises 314 members elected for nine years.

A third of them present themselves for re-election every three years.

The départements of France are for this purpose divided into three series: Series A comprises the départements running in alphabetical order from the Ain to Gard, including Algiers, Guadeloupe and the island Réunion. This series of ninety-six seats is renewable in January 1930. Series B comprises the départements from the Haute Garonne to the Oise, besides Constantine and Martinique. There are 106 seats. The members will present themselves for re-election in 1933. As for Series C, it comprises the départements from the Orne to the Yonne besides Oran and French India. There are 98 seats in this group. The war brought about many perturbations. Among other things it upset the sequence of Senatorial elections, and it has been necessary to restore that sequence by fixing the expiration of the mandate of Senators belonging to the Series C in 1927, although in point of fact they were elected in 1920.

According to the figures which are given of the Senatorial parties, there should be a majority of ten or so for the Gauche Démocratique Radicale et Radicale Socialiste. Against them should be ranged the Gauche Républicaine, the Union Républicaine and the little group of the Droite. But in reality party discipline is not strict in the Senate, and it is probable that on most occasions a Conservative majority could be found. Not

that the Senate cares lightly to put itself in opposition with the Chamber; it usually contents itself with registering a mild protest, and if it alters a Bill submitted to it by the Chamber, and the Chamber then restores the original text and returns the Bill to the Senate, it may be expected that the Senate will agree. The Senate regards itself as a guardian of the Constitution, that is its primary function. On Constitutional matters it is prepared to defy the Chamber, which may be led into extreme courses by party enthusiasm. But on all subjects in which no Constitutional principle is involved, the Senate has usually the good sense to submit to the will of the Chamber which is directly elected for a comparatively short period by the people. The Senators are conscious that they are appointed not by the people but by an Assembly, in the chief town of each département, of the Deputies in the département, the general councillors, the councillors of arrondissement and the delegates of the municipal councils, the number varying in accordance with the size of the municipal councils. Usually the Senate is, in consequence of the lack of passion at the Senatorial elections, and owing to the renewal of only one-third of the members at a particular time, fairly evenly balanced. When the Bloc National was in power the Senate appeared by contrast to be Liberal. When the Bloc des Gauches was in power, the Senate appeared by contrast to be Conservative. For even the so-called Radicals in the Senate are nothing like so Radical as the corresponding party in the Chamber, and the Conservatives in the Senate are, speaking generally, by no means as fanatical as the Conservatives in the Chamber. If one visits the Chamber one may be startled by lively and noisy scenes, but if one visits the Senate one will be struck by the decorum of the Upper House.

Nevertheless French Prime Ministers have learned to take the votes of the Senate very seriously. An adverse vote in the Senate may upset a government if the question of confidence has been posed or if the matter at issue is grave, just as certainly as an

adverse vote in the Chamber. One thing the Senate can hardly do unless it is prepared to take the risk of a great agitation, and that is to reverse the judgments of the Chamber in financial affairs. The Chamber holds jealously to its financial prerogatives. Unlike the Chamber the Senate cannot be dissolved.

Chapter 3

FOREIGN POLICY

To attempt to write even in the most summary form the post-War history of France in this place would be absurd, but it is necessary to glance at certain aspects of the years which succeeded the Armistice in order to understand the broad current of French foreign policy.

When the Armistice was declared there was at first nothing but rejoicing. The whole nation was happy that at last the prolonged suffering was over. France had been sustained by high ideals. The Allied politicians had made all kinds of secret bargains among themselves which were by no means consistent with their public professions, but the people were for the most part ignorant of these transactions, just as they were ignorant of the motives which induced statesmen to continue the war to a "knock-out." They had accepted the statements made to them at their face value. There was in their mind no possible doubt about the origin of the war: the blame was placed entirely on the shoulders of Germany. The conduct of the war by Germany had aroused the greatest indignation, and although the French armies, as other Allied armies, had often been in difficulties and had appeared to be cracking up, they were sustained by the belief that Germans were not as other men, and that a peace which did not arise out of an unquestionable French victory would be a peace which would leave the French again at the mercy of the hereditary foe.

The civilians were perfectly sincere in their belief that with the crushing of Germany there would be a real possibility of building a new and better world on the ruins of the old world. After the tremendous sacrifices endured at the front and behind the lines, anything short of the complete reconstruction of Europe in accordance with French ideas, which were honest and generous ideas, was thought to be intolerable. The views of the people were perhaps *simpliste*, but from the most intimate

knowledge of conditions in France at that time, I affirm emphatically that the ordinary man and woman was neither cynical nor imperialist. Nothing was wanted but a clean peace, and when, a little later, after the first rejoicings were over, President Wilson reached the shores of France with the promise of a new era, there was an enthusiasm such as I have never seen equalled. There seemed to be no reason why the admirable sentiments of those days should not be translated into a treaty which would genuinely put an end to the great European feud which had lasted for ages.

Unfortunately the politicians, and especially M. Clemenceau, were not so simple-minded. The enthusiasm was damped down. The prospect of a permanent settlement quickly vanished. Before the Conference had been sitting for long, cynicism had done its deadly work and had penetrated to all classes. It must not be supposed that at this time there was, so far as party labels are concerned, a reactionary parliament. The Chamber was Radical enough in complexion, but there was heard a depressing clamour for impossible things. The blockade against Germany was not raised as it should have been, and the seeds of a new hatred in Germany against France were blindly sown.

M. Clemenceau was then at the height of his popularity. It would have been better for his reputation had he retired when the victory was won. His career would in that case have been rounded off: it began with the defeat of France by Germany, and it would have ended with the defeat of Germany by France. He was held to be the man who had brought success to French arms, the man who had kept alive the flame of patriotism, who had stimulated faltering courage, who had displayed the most indomitable character. He was not the man to dictate peace. His vision was limited; he could not see even into the immediate future.

The Wilsonian peace was rejected, and one by one the famous Fourteen Points, which were the basis of the Armistice, were

broken. Indeed it was not long before there was an outcry against what was called the premature cessation of hostilities. The military men were reproached for having allowed the German army to retire in good order with flags flying. There were those who loudly asserted that France had been robbed of a full triumph. The tide turned in favour of *revanche* for the sufferings which France had endured. These fluctuations of feeling were natural enough, and the politicians encouraged them and took advantage of them.

There were two outstanding demands of France. First, in the universal ignorance of economics, it was believed that the most stupendous sums could be collected from Germany; it was believed (or at least pretended) that the heaviest ransom – euphemistically called Reparations – could be extorted from the beaten enemy. The Germans were, though despised, at the same time regarded as a race of supermen who could not only repair the terrible economic destruction that had been caused to their own country, but could repair the terrible economic destruction that had been caused to all the Allied countries. Such figures as 400 milliard gold marks were talked of, with a complete lack of knowledge of what such astronomical figures implied. It was useless to endeavour to persuade the politicians that they were too greedy. When it was suggested that all that could be hoped for was a sum which would be almost immediately mobilizable, the suggestion was laughed to scorn.

Had the Allies been willing to remain on the solid ground of realities they could have fixed a debt that Germany would have been only too anxious to wipe off and so free herself from the burden of liabilities. But reasonable propositions were utterly rejected. It was already seen that by holding a huge debt over Germany, that country might be kept under the domination of the French for a number of generations. Nobody appears to have inquired how it would be possible to stereotype the situation, how it would be possible for France to retain her

Allies at her side and to control a nation vastly superior in numbers. The short-sightedness of the politicians who drew up the Treaty of Versailles was in this respect almost incredible. The excessive demands recoiled like a boomerang upon the French.

For years they persuaded themselves that there was no need to work out their financial salvation; they did not tax themselves adequately; they did not practise self-denial; they poured out money like water. And all the time they told each other "Germany will pay." This initial error is, more than anything else, responsible for the financial position in which France afterwards found herself. With the exercise of a little common sense, it would have been possible not only to have avoided the contracting of many debts which were accumulated but to have obtained directly from Germany and indirectly through international loans based upon the German Debt, considerable sums of money for the repairing of the devastated regions. The British, although they also deceived themselves into supposing that Germany would pay, were somewhat more practical. While the French regarded the German Debt in the monstrous form in which they imagined it, as a perfectly sound debt, and were willing to accept it in lieu of cash, the British took care to obtain whatever it was possible to lay hands on in the shape of shipping and colonies.

*

It was not long before the British began to abandon their interest in reparations, and in my opinion they then somewhat unfairly turned upon France for persisting in her demands. They were converted to realities, and could afford to be converted to realities much more quickly than the French, who had been so misguided as to pin their whole hope on reparation payments, and had, hypnotized by this mirage, neglected their own finances. There came a moment when the French simply had to cling to reparations as a drowning man clings to a straw.

Even to reduce their claims meant that they must open their eyes to the most unpleasant facts concerning the state of their exchequer. Into that exchequer had poured the proceeds of many loans which had been spent far less cautiously than would have been the case had the French not been taught to look to Germany as a sort of fairy godfather.

Every credit must of course go to the British for their practical sense in paying a far larger proportion of the costs of war out of revenue than any other belligerent nation, and in taxing themselves after the war as no other people taxed itself, without any foolish reliance on outside aid. The French State, confident that its credits on Germany would be collected, pledged itself to compensate directly, irrespective of German payments, those who had suffered damage. This was an unwise course. In strict justice the war victims were entitled to compensation. In strict justice the French Government was entitled to the largest reparation payments. But justice is not everything, and more attention should undoubtedly have been paid to the financial possibilities. It would have been better for the State to have taken upon itself only a contingent responsibility, even though individual *sinistrés* suffered, rather than have crippled the country as it now appears to be crippled. Moreover, Frenchmen have themselves pointed to the scandal of the excessive payments that were made in many cases to the more influential *sinistrés*. There has been ominous talk of the "Panama of the ruined regions." To some extent – though one must be careful not to accept the exaggerated charges of party politicians – the accusation is justified. What did a million or two matter when Germany had to pay ? No French war victim was conscious, in making an inflated claim, of injuring his own country. It was Germany who was to provide vast quantities of Rhine gold. Nor was the State particularly anxious to cut down the claims to a minimum, for the State, too, was certain that it would be reimbursed by Germany.

Obviously such a policy could result only in the deadliest disillusionment. Nevertheless it is to be remarked that, although there may have been some belief on the part of the French Government that the money would be forthcoming, the enormous reparation demands had also a political purpose. It was not desired that Germany should acquit herself at once. While she was in some degree a vassal of the Allies, she would be at a disadvantage. Reparations were conceived not only as a just demand on Germany but as a burden placed upon Germany's back. Apparently it was nobody's business to ask how long Germany would support such a burden without the most violent attempt to cast it from her shoulders. It was nobody's business to ask whether the policy of overloading Germany did not mean not merely ruin for Germany and perhaps ruin for other countries which were making themselves dependent upon Germany, but further, as the alternative to complete European confusion, another and a still more redoubtable war.

When one looks back on the fatal months of 1919, one can only suppose that the whole world was mad. But it must be remembered that we are now looking back in the light of experience, and although a few of us at the time were afraid of the consequences which were to be foreseen, experience was lacking, and the problems with which the statesmen were faced were far too stupendous for those who were then responsible for their solution.

Of M. Clemenceau, it may be frankly said that he was cynical. Of Mr. Lloyd George, it may be said that he had glimpses of the truth, but permitted himself to be swayed by the passions of the moment. Of Mr. Wilson it is better to say nothing at all: his ideals were high, but he was lost and bewildered in the company in which he found himself. There were many other figures in this great Paris Conference, but these three were the outstanding figures, and they were not to be counselled.

It is true that efforts were made to set on foot a League of

Nations, but the League as it was constituted was a mere sop to the idealists; it was a combination of the victorious Powers. Whether it will yet develop into a truly international body with aims that are capable of fulfilment, is a question which will be answered hereafter. It may well be that the Covenant is the saving virtue of the Versailles Treaty, but the French authorities were principally occupied with another subject, which, as we have seen, is somewhat overlapped by that of reparations – it is the subject of security.

*

Security may be described as the philosophers' stone of our age. The search for it is somewhat absurd. It cannot be attained, and most methods that have been adopted to attain it are likely to decrease rather than increase such security as we have. There was a fear that Germany might seek her *revanche*. France had suffered a succession of invasions. Some of these invasions were provoked by herself. But as the very effort to crush Germany under reparations might provoke a terrific reaction, and as some of the territorial settlements of the treaties, especially in the East, were indefensible, even in the most confident moments France was perplexed about the future.

That Alsace Lorraine should be returned by Germany to France was entirely just, but that France should endeavour to create a new Alsace Lorraine in Germany – a Germania irridenta – was the height of folly. The French advisers hankered after some kind of disannexation – as it was euphemistically called – of the German provinces on the Left Bank of the Rhine. The Rhineland has always been considered to be the natural frontier of France. Rhineland is held to constitute a jumping-off place for a new German invasion. The documents that were submitted to the Peace Conference by Marshal Foch have long ago been made public. Without actually annexing these regions there was a desire to have them controlled by the French, or if needs be, by an international body. Many Frenchmen believed

that the Rhinelanders themselves would prefer that their territory should be neutralized rather than be made the cockpit of future wars.

This demand that the Rhine be made the frontier of Germany has, in one form or another, dominated French policy ever since the War days. The British and the Americans were strongly opposed to any severance of the Rhineland from Germany, and all the arguments which represented the Rhine as the natural frontier of France fell on deaf ears. A compromise which was bound to create fresh difficulties was at last agreed upon: Rhineland was to be divided into three parts and occupied for periods of five, ten and fifteen years by Allied troops.

By way of compensation to France, America and England agreed to the elaboration of a triple pact. From the beginning it was plain that such a pact would prove to be abortive, but the French seemed satisfied with it as an additional safeguard. In the sequel the pact, like the Versailles Treaty itself, was not ratified by America, and England thereupon in her turn let it fall to the ground.

There remains, however, the occupation of Rhineland. According to a subsequent interpretation of the Treaty, this occupation, though limited to definite periods of years, could be converted into a perpetual occupation by the operation of clauses which, in certain circumstances, appear to give the Allies the right to prolong their stay. If, for example, at the end of the fifteen years' occupation, the guarantees against unprovoked aggression by Germany are not considered sufficient, the evacuation of the occupying troops may be delayed. If Germany is in default in regard to reparations, the Allies may decide against evacuation. The Allies were afterwards gradually to extend the obvious meaning of the clauses in question, and were to fall into the realm of the arbitrary.

It is to be remarked that it is precisely those who proclaim most loudly the necessity of sticking to the letter of the Treaty who

are most ready to break the spirit of the Treaty when it suits their purpose. There are, indeed, in the Treaty to be found, with a little ingenuity, sufficient pretexts for remaining in Rhineland in perpetuity. Doubtless this was intended by M. Clemenceau, M. André Tardieu and Marshal Foch.

When in the later discussions, from 1920 to 1925, there was question of reparations, the French always half intended the word "reparations" to mean security. Money they certainly wanted, but on the whole they would have reconciled themselves to the non-receipt of money provided reparation claims remained in their hands as an instrument for the break-up of Germany. There was put to the French a quaint conundrum: Do you want to milk the cow, or to cut it into steaks? The French knew that they could not have it both ways; they never consciously made up their minds which way they wanted it; but sub-consciously it was the idea of security which prevailed.

If Germany was strong enough to pay large reparations, then the French might well have cause to fear. If Germany could not fulfil her liabilities, then, although the French might cry out that Germany was only shamming, they would have a satisfactory presumption that Germany was weak. The dilemma was, however, more complicated, for if Germany became strong enough to pay, she would also be strong enough to refuse to pay. From capital to capital, from Casino to Casino in Europe, we trailed through long years putting the problem in a thousand different ways. I believe that I, as an observer, held an unenviable record for unbroken attendance at these conferences which succeeded the Paris Conference of 1919, and year in and year out I listened to every conceivable variation on the two themes of reparations and security.

*

Throughout the whole of French policy until 1925, I think then that security was the real French objective, although reparations were talked about much more publicly. When M. Millerand

became Prime Minister in succession to M. Clemenceau in the Parliament of the Bloc National, he was clearly obsessed by the problem of security. At Spa and at San Remo reparations might be on the Agenda; there might be the greatest wrangles between the French representative and the British representative – who was then Mr. Lloyd George – about the division of the spoil; but outside the conference the whole of French action was directed towards the consolidation of their military and diplomatic position in Europe.

I am persuaded that at Spa the Germans would have been only too happy to have been allowed to bring the necessary men and material into France for the rebuilding of the shattered provinces. It was hard to understand why they were not allowed to do so. Doubtless French contractors and other profiteers were opposed to any course which would deprive them of the benefit which they expected in supplying what was needed in the north, but the State authorities should not have been influenced by such considerations. One had the impression that it was not only because cash was preferred (and incidentally coal, which may be regarded as the raw material of riches) but because the French Government did not wish Germany to escape so easily and give her undivided attention to her own recovery, that the German offers were refused.

When M. Paléologue was, at the Quai d'Orsay, the Director of Foreign Affairs for a short time, he elaborated a scheme of alliances which was designed to put permanent pressure on Germany and serve as a buttress for France. There was even a wild dream of a great Danubian Confederation which would include Bavaria. Bavaria was to be detached from Protestant Prussia. It was to be joined to Austria which was also Catholic, and be linked with the new and the new-old States which had been formed in Central Europe and which had Catholic leanings. The basis of this anti-Prussian combination was Catholic. It had, of course, no chance of success. Diplomacy cannot be made as

diagrammatic as the Quai d'Orsay at that time desired. But the policy of alliances took definite shape. From the Baltic to the Black Sea it was hoped to construct a chain of States to be controlled by France. Poland had already been made larger than was advisable in purely Polish interests, and a Corridor to Danzig, which was to give an outlet to Poland on the sea, had been constructed, although this Corridor cut Prussia into two and offered a perpetual provocation, a permanent temptation to Germany to violate the Treaty. Poland was to take the place of Russia upon which France had in the pre-War years relied, and which was now the prey of Bolshevism. Poland was to maintain large armies as France was to maintain large armies, and the fates of the two countries were by special treaty to be associated.

It was the desire for security and not the fear of Communism spreading to France which largely determined the aggressive attitude of France in respect of Russia. Since Russia could no longer be counted upon, since in a diplomatic sense it was replaced by Poland, it was necessary to preserve Poland from the Bolshevik armies. Hence the French were constantly intriguing against Russia and launching without respite army after army against Russia. M. Millerand even recognized the foolish Wrangel Government, and encouraged the Wrangel army.

It is to be noted that if, by any chance, the anti-Bolshevik crusade had succeeded, the plans of France would have collapsed more completely even than they collapsed owing to the failure of the anti-Bolshevik push; for any kind of restoration in Russia would have meant the revival of Russian Imperialism and the inevitable diminution of Poland and of other Central and Eastern European countries. In that case, it is to be presumed French diplomacy would have put its money once more on Russia. The French under Millerand just managed to save Warsaw from being captured by the Bolsheviks. They pro-

vided Poland with money and with material and with officers.

Czecho-Slovakia, which was afterwards also specially bound by treaty to France, began to take the leadership of the Little Entente which was in process of formation, and everything was done to extend French influence in Roumania and in Yugo-Slavia.

At an early date French policy took a more generous view of the situation in Austria than might have been supposed when the Peace Conference ruthlessly broke up the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. The little country of Austria, which was hardly strong enough to live by itself, was forbidden by the Treaty to ally itself to Germany and thus strengthen the German Confederation, which was the true enemy of France. It appeared to be a cruel decision, but it was taken in the interests of security. Had it been possible to detach other States from Germany, such as Bavaria, doubtless a different view would have been taken, but any strengthening of the German unity was remorselessly resisted.

When it appeared that Austria might even be won over, or at any rate definitely severed from Germany, when there was nothing to be feared from this quarter, the French behaved kindly enough to the little State, and did not strenuously oppose the virtual cancellation of Austrian debts, and even supported the rehabilitation of Austria under the scheme of the League of Nations.

So confident was M. Millerand that Europe could be re-arranged after the French pattern, that he did not hesitate to break the common front of the war Allies – that is to say, he began to ask whether France could not throw over England. "With or without the Allies" – that is to say, with or without England – was the historic phrase which he used, and the French march to Frankfort, in spite of the warning of England, was an indication of two things: first, that France was prepared to do without England; and second, that at all costs she wished

to break up Germany. M. Millerand, however, acted hastily and prematurely and the French left Frankfort almost as soon as they entered it. This attempt to cast off the British hegemony – as it was called, because it interfered with the fulfilment of French policy – was to be repeated in a variety of ways, and it was becoming difficult for France and England to work together.

It would be wrong to minimize the dissensions which arose between the two countries on the question of reparations, but it is true that the dissensions chiefly, though not ostensibly, arose on account of the different conceptions that the two countries came to have of security. The Leygues interregnum may be passed over, and we come to the Briand administration of 1921.

*

M. Briand is a supple statesman, and he saw that antagonism to England would be of no service to France. He was conciliatory. But it must not be forgotten that M. Briand was responsible for three extremely important events. First there was the dispute about Upper Silesia. Both Poland and Germany claimed this rich mining district. The sympathies of England, by this time, were certainly with Germany; the sympathies of France, in pursuance of the general policy of security which I have outlined, could not but be with Poland. There was a deadlock. Eventually the matter was referred to the League of Nations. The members of the League were perplexed. The League was not at that time strong enough – and it is not yet strong enough – to ignore the wishes of the Great Powers, and it could hardly be expected to act in full independence.

Different views may be held about the Upper Silesian Award. There are those who consider it to be as impartial and as judicial as it possibly could be, but the view of the majority of those acquainted with the subject is that Poland was unduly favoured. France, at any rate, was encouraged in the belief that she had won a diplomatic victory and had strengthened Poland and thus strengthened herself as against Germany.

The second notable event was the occupation by the Allies of Düsseldorf, Ruhrort and Duisburg. This extension of the occupation may properly be taken to be the beginning of the occupation of the Ruhr. The immediate cause of the occupation was the German default in reparation payments, but the real motive would seem to be the pursuit of security. France had placed herself in another key position.

That the British acquiesced in this decision is an argument of little avail. The British were not prepared to break the Entente Cordiale. Public opinion had not reached that point; a rupture would have been bitterly criticized. In the circumstances England had scarcely any alternative. It has been suggested, however, that M. Briand was not a convinced partisan of the policy of an extended occupation, and that he took this step in order to render the full occupation of the Ruhr impossible.

His famous cry of *Debout les classes* was calculated to alarm the French, who were opposed to a fresh partial mobilization. The people had had enough of militarism, and although they would not oppose an expedition if no price were to be paid, they were informed by M. Briand himself in this cry that Frenchmen would have to be called up from their civilian occupations for the business of soldiering again. M. Briand is too subtle a politician for anybody to ascertain precisely what was in his mind. The probability is that he was aware of the inconveniences and dangers of French policy, and wished it to be understood that he was aware of them, but nevertheless felt bound to pursue the policy which was favoured by French political opinion. He did try to obtain more reasonable arrangements about the German Debt, but the word reasonable must be understood in a relative sense.

When, by agreement among the Governments, the Reparation Commission in May 1921 drew up the Schedule of Payments and announced that 132 milliard gold marks were expected

from Germany to be distributed in accordance with the percentages agreed upon at Spa – namely, 52 per cent. for France, 22 per cent. for England, 8 per cent. for Belgium and the balance to be divided between a number of other countries – it was genuinely felt that some progress had been made. 132 milliards was not quite such a formidable figure as had been mentioned at the beginning, but it was in reality no less impossible. Eighty milliards expressed in C Bonds which were to bear interest only when the payment of the A and B Bonds was assured, were in any event scrap paper. Although the claim was smaller, it was still unreal.

M. Loucheur, who was the right-hand man of M. Briand, sought to develop the system of payments in kind, and came to an accord with Herr Rathenau at Wiesbaden. The Loucheur-Rathenau accords yielded nothing, partly because of the continued dislike of French manufacturers and contractors for German importations.

At Cannes, at the beginning of the following year, there was another conference at which a compromise was almost reached, but before it could be concluded M. Briand was compelled to return to Paris and to resign the Premiership. It is impossible to tell whether M. Briand had he been given a free hand would have led Franco-German discussions into smoother channels. His Government was out of season, and the Poincaré experiment had to be tried.

The third important event under the Briand Ministry was the resumption of relations with the Vatican. Its connection with the general trend of French policy in Central Europe will be apparent. It was part of the policy of establishing a firm diplomatic foothold in the centres of Catholicism, in order to make the French camp in Europe as extensive as possible. There was a revival of the influence of the Vatican of which France resolved to avail herself, and to carry out her plans it was essential that she should forget the old feud with the Roman Catholic authori-

ties and should be represented by an Ambassador at the Holy See. Security was still the watchword.

As for the friendship of France with Turkey, it was resumed at this time owing to the activities of M. Franklin Bouillon. There was a number of involved motives, but on the whole the new attitude towards Turkey fitted into the general scheme of French policy. It was partly dictated by the hope of keeping Russia, with its new rulers, at bay. As the French then saw the "German peril" there was some danger of a Russo-German alliance: the two countries had a common enemy – Poland. Germany was the nearest neighbour of Russia, and when Russia had settled down, Germany would have the best chance of beginning some kind of colonizing movement in Russia. It was feared that, even were it possible for the French with their Allies to keep Germany from manufacturing arms at home, it would be easy for Germany to make munitions on Russian soil. Turkey was counted upon to occupy, to some extent, the attention of Russia. But there were other causes. There was a growing hostility in the Near East between England and France. France had obtained a mandate for Syria; while England was installed in other parts of Arabia – in Mesopotamia (Irak), in Palestine, the home of the Jews, notably, and the Hedjaz and other peoples were her puppets. The French felt that their task was made more arduous by the constant bickerings between them and the British in the Near East, and if Syria was to be held it could only be with the collaboration of the Turks. The Greeks were frankly disliked by the French, and Greece was regarded as the tool of England. I have good reason to know that behind much that happened in the Near East was an intense anti-British sentiment.

*

The Poincaré experiment had to be made. During 1922 there was much angry dispute between France and England. On the surface reparations were the subject of the prolonged quarrel.

England had lost interest in the impossible task of collecting vast sums of money from Germany and was more concerned with the pacification of Europe. In a pacified Europe it was hoped trade would revive and British industry and commerce, which were badly hit, had need of all the markets which could be found. But M. Poincaré was not prepared to reduce the French demands or to allow Germany to settle down. With Germany on her feet again France might be quickly overwhelmed.

Every effort was made to represent the issue as exclusively financial, but the issue was not so much financial as political. Eventually the Ruhr was occupied on the ground that Germany was in default. It was true that Germany was in default, as she was bound to be, but it is hardly to be doubted that, in spite of the attempt to prevent any discussion of France's security, the control of the Ruhr was wanted as a measure of precaution against future German aggression. Once in the Ruhr it seemed impossible to get France out again.

Now, the Ruhr is the most highly organized industrial region of Germany, and while the French could contrive on any pretext to stay in the Ruhr, France, it was assumed, would be safe. How could Germany arm herself without the Ruhr? The Sarre, which, under the Treaty, was subject to a plebiscite some years hence, was already detached from the Reich. The calculation was, in itself, plausible, but it was vitiated by the fact that the British were now at open war with the illegal conduct of the French, and that Germany was sooner or later bound to find some means of forcibly expelling the French. If the Ruhr experiment failed, then Germany would have been exasperated to no purpose. Another war would be rendered inevitable, and France, in spite of the network of alliances which she had woven on the Continent, could not without British support – to say nothing of American co-operation – hope to win in the end against a well-organized people vastly superior in numbers.

Unquestionably M. Poincaré himself realized the tremendous

risk he was running. From time to time one heard much talk of the "Continental Bloc." The Continental Bloc is, in essence, an alliance, economic and political, of Germany and France. Other countries would, of course, come into the Bloc, but according to the French conception of it, Germany and France would together dominate Europe. A Bloc of this kind might be anti-British. But was the somewhat vague policy of the Continental Bloc in direct opposition to the policy of the dismemberment of Germany which was adopted by France? At first sight it would appear that it was impossible to reconcile the two alternatives, but in the minds of many Frenchmen the Ruhr operations might be used to bring pressure on Germany and induce her to accept French terms, economic and political. If the fight was carried on long enough, and if Rhineland and the Palatinate could not be detached from Germany – although there were desperate efforts on the part of local officials to bring about this disintegration – then in the end Germany might be brought to see that peace with France was better than war. It would be putting the case too high to assert that the Continental Bloc, in this sense, was consciously aimed at by the French, but undoubtedly there was some prospect of matters so shaping themselves that French policy would be totally transformed.

For many reasons one would like to see a real understanding between France and Germany; only on this condition is there a certainty of peace in Europe. But an artificial combination such as it would almost certainly be, would be extremely dangerous for France. In the long run France would be subjugated by Germany, peacefully it is true, but none the less subjugated.

*

How all this would have worked out it is now impossible to say, for in the middle of 1924 there was a change of government in France and there was a fresh orientation of policy. In part, at least, the change of policy was brought about by the increasing

difficulties of French finance. Not only England but America had turned against France and were blaming her for the militarism which was rampant in Europe. France was not only maintaining excessively large armies, but was encouraging the maintenance of excessively large armies in all the smaller States of Europe. Apart from her immediate Allies, such as Belgium, there was generally the most utter condemnation of France.

When the franc began to slump and financial aid was imperatively called for, when bankruptcy was imminent, it was seen that the search for security had led France into miry paths. The good opinion of the world cannot be despised, the conscience of mankind cannot be flouted for long.

M. Herriot came into power with the Radicals and Socialists behind him determined to clean up the mess. He began by proclaiming "peace to the world." A settlement which was probably only a temporary settlement of the reparations question, brought the world consciously face to face with the graver problems. The reparations question had been, as I have tried to show, merely a screen. It is necessary, however, to recall in what way the reparations question was disposed of, and France for a time recovered the goodwill of the world.

In the latter part of 1923 M. Poincaré found himself unable to resist the demand for a reference of the reparations question to an international committee, and in the early part of 1924 a Committee of Experts met in Paris. It worked uninterruptedly until April 9 at the headquarters of the Reparation Commission. It made a Report which practically scrapped the Reparation Commission and set up other machinery. On the Committee sat two representatives of each of the following countries: America, England, France, Italy and Belgium. These representatives were General Charles G. Dawes, Mr. Owen D. Young, Sir Robert M. Kindersley, Sir Josiah C. Stamp, M. J. Parmentier, M. Edgard Allix, Signor Alberto Pirelli, Signor Federico

Flora, M. E. Francqui, M. Maurice Houtart. The Main Committee was known as the Dawes Committee and the Report as the Dawes Report, although in point of fact, if any one man should have given his name to it it was the English representative, Sir Josiah Stamp. A second committee of experts met at the same time to estimate the amount of German exported capital, and to consider means of bringing it back to Germany. This committee was composed of Mr. Reginald MacKenna, Mr. Henry N. Robinson, M. A. Laurent-Atthalin, Signor Mario Alberti and M. Albert Janssen.

From the moment that such a committee, representing the world's expert opinion, was appointed, the death-knell of the French policy was sounded. However much M. Poincaré had endeavoured to thwart its conclusions, they would have been irresistible. As it was, it was M. Herriot who had the opportunity of discussing its application.

The Dawes Plan may be shortly summarized. Its purpose was to provide for such reparation payments as were possible, and at the same time to balance the German budget and stabilize German currency – that is to say, to build up the Germany which France had tried to shatter. The Plan provided for an International Loan of 800 million gold marks and the establishment of a new Bank of Issue in Germany to stabilize the German currency and to enable Germany to meet the first year's reparation payments. Reparation payments were to be made through the Bank of Issue. The sources of revenue of these payments were to be: (1) In part the International Loan; (2) a mortgage on German railways; (3) a mortgage on German industries; (4) a transport tax and revenues from the general budget guaranteed by certain "controlled revenues." The experts estimated that the Plan should produce for reparation payments one milliard marks the first year, 1,220 million marks the second year. In the fifth year a maximum annual payment of 2,500 million marks should be obtained. Thereafter pay-

ments were to be on a sliding scale and subject to addition or reduction.

It is particularly to be observed that no total was fixed. Nobody knows when the Dawes Plan is to come to an end. Clearly from the French point of view, this is not, as has been pretended, an advantage but a disadvantage. It followed also that the Ruhr should be evacuated. In short, Germany, though put under foreign control, is protected from the activities of French politicians who strove for her destruction.

But the most important point is that to prevent these payments from affecting Germany's financial stability adversely, an index of prosperity has been fixed. The Plan differentiates between the amount that can be raised in Germany and the amount that can be raised abroad. It provides that Germany's payments abroad shall not exceed its earnings abroad. The Agent-General for Reparation Payments – an American – is to receive all payments. Five experts in foreign exchange and finance are to control the use and withdrawal of the deposits made in Germany. Once the money is put into a pool, Germany's responsibility ceases. The onus is not upon her but upon the Allies, to transfer the payments to foreign countries. Thus it would be difficult to prove that Germany was in default provided she kept the pool filled. Now, in the transference of payments, on which everything depends, the principle was adopted that it was to be effected in such manner as to keep the currencies steady. If it should subsequently be discovered that reparation payments by Germany exceeded the sums that could be transferred without creating difficulties, the excess payments were to be allowed to accumulate in the Bank of Issue, but these accumulations were not to exceed two milliard gold marks. When they passed that figure they were to be used in bonds and loans in Germany. The total accumulation in Germany was not, said the experts, to exceed five milliard gold marks; if this figure was reached, further reparation payments by Germany ceased until the

transfer of the accumulated fund became possible. This is tantamount to saying that in future not only will Germany not be obliged to pay if she is not in a position to pay, but that no blame is to be attached to her. The payment of reparations is not to be allowed seriously to weaken the German State. The strangle-hold of France is automatically removed. Even had M. Herriot wished to remain in the Ruhr he could not reasonably have done otherwise than promise evacuation and the surrender of the whole system of pledges and exploitation by a Franco-Belgian régie of the Westphalo-Rhenan Railways which M. Poincaré had carefully constructed.

*

Whether in the first burst of enthusiasm M. Herriot did not proceed too quickly may well be questioned. In promising to leave the Ruhr by September 1925, and in fact reducing the occupation to the most negligible proportions even before the end of 1924, he declined to avail himself of an arm which might have been used in various diplomatic discussions which were due. There was, for example, the matter of commercial relations between France and Germany. Under the Versailles Treaty the special provisions which were chiefly designed to help Alsace-Lorraine in the period of transition, came to an end on Jauuary 10, 1925, and France and Germany were to stand facing each other, ready to engage, if they chose, in a war of tariffs.

From the German point of view, a war of tariffs with France did not present any great risk, but from the French point of view such a war was bound to bring dreadful inconveniences. The peculiar position of Alsace-Lorraine must always be remembered by French statesmen. The two provinces were recovered at the Armistice after remaining under German dominion for half a century. Without for a moment suggesting that France's claim to Alsace-Lorraine can be disputed, it cannot be disguised that the inhabitants of these provinces have some German

affinities and do not resemble the so-called typical French folk. Comparatively few of them had even learned to speak French. Clearly it was the business of France to keep the people of Alsace-Lorraine thoroughly satisfied. If difficulties were to arise for them, they would naturally begin to regret that they had been transferred from Germany to France.

Certain problems which arose in respect of Alsace-Lorraine must be dealt with elsewhere, but here we must note, in passing, the economic dependence of Alsace-Lorraine on Germany. If the provinces face Frenchwards they still look over their shoulder at Germany. Their railways and their whole industrial system are built in such manner that for many years to come Alsace-Lorraine will be connected with Germany. Some of their goods in the process of manufacture must cross and recross the German frontier. This particularly applies to the textile trade. The metallurgical industry relies upon German coal and coke, but many of the products of Alsace-Lorraine must necessarily be sold on the German market. They must have an outlet across the border; they have not yet found their markets in France. Therefore Alsace-Lorraine could not remain prosperous unless there were satisfactory Customs arrangements between the French and the German Governments. Germany, by putting up an insurmountable barrier against Alsace-Lorraine, could injure the recovered provinces, whose anger would probably be turned against France rather than against Germany for the failure to come to an agreement.

This was the terrible politico-economic weapon which Germany held on January 10, 1925, and bitterly did the critics of M. Herriot reproach him for having abandoned the weapon of the Ruhr occupation before coming to terms with Germany. In the end Germany in a provisional accord practically obtained her own conditions tantamount to a " most favoured nation" clause, though specifically such a clause is forbidden by French law.

At the same date the Cologne bridge-head in Rhineland should

have been evacuated by the Allies. This was one of the sections into which Rhineland, for occupational purposes, was divided by the Treaty-makers. The Allies were to leave it five years after the coming into force of the Treaty. Other sections were to be abandoned ten years and fifteen years after the coming into force of the Treaty. But the French had always, until M. Herriot came into power, maintained that these periods of five, ten and fifteen years, did not even begin to run until Germany was genuinely fulfilling her Treaty promises. Everything went to show that Germany was not fulfilling her disarmament promises. She had begun to make reparations under the Dawes Plan, but not even the Radical Government – whose *raison d'être* was the assumption of goodwill on the part of Germany, of the existence of a peace-loving democracy in Germany which only needed encouragement – could pretend that the disarmament clauses had been carried out. There were many signs that the German people looked upon the new orientation of French policy as a confession of weakness. If the Poincaré policy was bankrupt, the Herriot policy was also bankrupt. France had, as it were, taken hold of the tail of a crocodile and to let go seemed to be fatal.

The problem of security thus presented itself after a few months of Radical government in a still more acute form. It was possible to believe that the reparations problem was at any rate temporarily settled, but it was not possible to believe that security had been attained by this new agreement. Whether it would have been possible immediately after the Armistice to have shaken hands with Germany and to have abandoned once and for all the last of the great European feuds will always remain doubtful, but by this time Germany had been so infuriated that a reconciliation had become exceedingly difficult. All the reports from Germany showed that she was nourishing projects of *revanche*. The very occupation of the Ruhr had made matters worse. The Inter-Allied Mission of Military Control

had for the whole period of the Ruhr occupation been unable to operate, and although France had what she fondly believed to be a strangle-hold on Germany in the Ruhr, throughout the vast extent of the rest of German territory there was drilling and recruiting and the manufacture of arms in open defiance of the Treaty.

General Nollet, who for years had been the French Chief of the Mission, confessed its absolute impotence. In a notable report made just before the fall of the Bloc National, he had called attention to the most suspicious circumstances. This Report was hushed up, and Nollet was taken into the Herriot Cabinet as War Minister. To have revealed his Report would have been to make the Herriot experiment impossible, but as the time for the withdrawal from Cologne approached, it grew increasingly difficult to maintain the generous assumption on which M. Herriot had been working. The Mission's new report came in implacable, convincing, deadly. The dilemma which faced M. Herriot was whether he could in fairness to France continue his experiment, or whether he could, without stultifying himself, completely reverse his policy.

He and his British colleagues decided that until it was shown that Germany had really disarmed they must remain in Cologne. What is to be the future of Rhineland? The question must sooner or later be answered in a more statesmanlike manner. It is impossible for the Allies to remain for ever. The Separatist Movement appears to have been broken, but from the French point of view Rhineland is still the jumping-off place for a new invasion, and unless there is permanent control, which will assure the demilitarization of Rhineland, there can, it is argued, be no safety for the French. The proposal has been made, and it seems inevitable that we must return to it, that Rhineland should be occupied not by Allied troops – which Germany sooner or later, if they do not leave voluntarily, must expel – but by a small contingent of international officials directed by the

League of Nations to which Germany cannot take exception, and which will effectively prevent the re-militarization of the bridge-heads and territories on the Left Bank of the Rhine. It will ultimately be the business of the League of Nations also to supervise generally the disarmament of Germany, but this means that the League must be given more power than at present, and the fate of the League is still undecided. That it will exist in some form or other is almost certain, but that it will ever acquire sufficient moral authority backed up by some material force, is doubtful.

M. Herriot tried to solve the problem of security by giving to the League more vitality. A protocol was elaborated by which all the members of the League would contract to go to the assistance of any country improperly attacked. The aggressor was defined as the nation which refused to arbitrate. Unfortunately the proposed protocol appeared to consecrate the *status quo* in Europe. Whatever is said to the contrary, no agreement among the Powers to fight for the *status quo* will ever be carried out. Everybody knows that Germany some day or other will strive to obtain a revision of the political and territorial arrangements which have been made during recent years, either by peaceful means or by military means. Danzig, Upper Silesia, the Sarre and a dozen other subjects of dispute make any suggestion of the preservation of present conditions an absurdity; and protocol or no protocol, if there is no revision of the Treaty, England and the Dominions, to say nothing of America, will refuse to fight for a cause which does not appear in their eyes to be a valid cause. The Dawes Report was a broom which swept away some of the rubbish on the doorstep, but unless we are prepared to cross the threshold and to take our places at a great diplomatic assembly which will reconstruct Europe on better foundations, all that has hitherto been done will prove to be useless, and Europe will have to work out its salvation in blood and fire. It is not by a pathetic clinging to the *status quo*

that France and her Central European Allies will find security.

We have seen, then, that the multitudinous conferences about reparations, about the division of the spoils, have been mere smoke screens, and that behind the discussions on the occupation of the Ruhr and of Rhineland and so forth, the true and the only genuine preoccupation of European statesmen is security. The whole of the French foreign policy since the Armistice, when analysed, is shown to be in all its phases a search avowed and unavowed for security. But security, even of a relative kind, lies only in a Franco-German *rapprochement*. The chief French objection to the Stresemann proposals of 1925 was that they would seem to imply a desertion of France's Allies in the East to whom she had committed herself irrevocably. But a Security Pact confirming the Western frontiers of France, together with arbitration treaties, was discussed by M. Briand, the Foreign Minister in the Painlevé Government, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, and Herr Stresemann.

Chapter 4

THE FIGHTING FORCES

THE most powerful army to-day in Europe is that of France. It is true that there are proposals to reduce the number of men in barracks or on duty in Rhineland and in the French dependencies, but even if one assumes that the French forces will eventually be brought down to half a million men, the country will still possess the most formidable army in Europe. In considering the risks of war it is well to bear in mind that France is undoubtedly better prepared than any nation which could possibly attack her. There is indeed but one nation which France looks upon with anxiety, and that is Germany. But Germany, though doubtless committing many breaches of the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty, is allowed an army of only 100,000 men. They are volunteers and engage themselves for long periods. Thus there cannot be a steady authorized drilling of the whole of German man-power, whereas in France every young man, no matter what his situation, has to undergo military training. In Germany the General Staff is abolished: in France the strength of officers is unlimited. Moreover Germany is not allowed to keep a military Air Service, nor must there be any fortifications on the Rhine. It is alleged that the development of civil aviation in Germany will enable the country to convert rapidly a number of machines into bombers and scouts. Heavy guns and war material in excess of a certain allowance were destroyed in Germany, and it is difficult to see how they can be replaced.

We have seen that France, ever since the Armistice, has clamoured for security. We have seen how the demand for security has dominated the whole of French diplomacy. But when one comes to consider the facts, one is amazed that France should have allowed herself to be so obsessed. What is this security about which we have heard so much? What nation and what individual has any right to absolute safety? How is it pos-

sible to assure France that she has in reality little to fear and has many advantages on her side? The politicians have put their claims far too high. No first-class nation has hitherto sought guarantees for its existence, and certainly no first-class nation, in the moment of victory, has expressed so frequently and so loudly its fear of defeat. The people, who have their slightly cynical philosophy of life, are not worrying: they have no illusions concerning the possibility of making themselves invincible. But the politicians, from the beginning, finding that other countries (themselves no more secure than any country has ever been in the history of the world) "fell for" this sort of talk, have done nothing but bewail the instability of mundane things. They discovered that everything could be excused on the ground that the search for security is a perfectly legitimate and honourable search instead of being, as many people hold it to be, a craven and a silly search. Security has been made to cover a multitude of sins. It covered the occupation of the Ruhr and it covered the prolonged occupation of the Cologne zone. It covered Geneva protocols designed to fix the *status quo* in Europe and mutual guarantee treaties whose real effect would be to divide Europe into two armed camps. It may well be that this miserable search for security into which the diplomatists have fallen is the measure of our time. The child's game of building up the constituents of Europe in a perilous equilibrium is likely to result in a crash. "Live dangerously!" cried Nietzsche, but France replies, "Live safely."

Unfortunately nearly all the attempts to obtain security defeat their own purpose, complicate the situation, and make the chances of an upheaval much greater. The plain truth is that France was perfectly safe after the War, and would continue to be perfectly safe had she not in her desire for security entered into all kinds of unnecessary engagements and woven a network of accords in Europe. The lessons of the last war would not have been forgotten by this generation, and Germany would

have had nothing to gain by another war with France, and would have risked much had France kept on decent terms with the rest of the world. After all, nations do not make war for sentimental reasons such as thirst for revenge. The real difficulty is that in the rest of Europe there are territorial and political settlements of 1919 which cannot possibly stand, and which sooner or later must be revised, either in peaceful conference or in bloody conflict. France not only chose to exasperate Germany, but in this search for security committed herself to the preservation of the *status quo*, and the danger is not that Germany will attack France, but that France will feel obliged to go to the assistance of an Ally, or the Ally of an Ally, and fight Germany.

Although we have treated the French policy of security in the most sympathetic manner, we are bound to ask whether France does not ask for an excessive margin of safety. If one were to express the matter in terms of a card game, one would say that France demands no fewer than four aces. The unilateral disarmament of Germany, even though it could not be altogether guaranteed, was a fairly effective precaution, but France also required disannexation of the Rhineland from Germany and, in fact, obtained the Allied occupation of Rhineland for a period of years which may prove to be indefinite, with the hope of instituting some League of Nations machinery to assure permanent demilitarization at the end. Then diplomacy added a third ace – a series of alliances between various nations from the Baltic to the Black Sea at the head of which stands France. France further pleaded for a fourth major card – a British guarantee of her safety; for that is how she regarded most of the proposals which were put forward. Have then the French an "inferiority complex," or is this insistence on security merely political clap-trap indulged in to a point at which the average rational foreigner is ready to revolt? Even the horrors of chemical warfare and aerial warfare have been vastly overdone, for

France is far from neglecting her air services, and though she has a much smaller population than Germany, should not consider herself at a disadvantage, since numbers are not essential in such kind of fighting; indeed more havoc can be perpetrated in thickly populated and highly organized districts.

*

Certainly one would not suggest that France should disarm. She is entitled to take whatever measures are necessary against the possibility of fresh attacks. But France would deserve greater respect were she to take such measures without undue insistence on the special dangers to which she is subjected. It is interesting to see how the wheel is turning full circle, and how France is reverting to the famous conception of a nation in arms which was first proclaimed on August 23, 1793. On that date the Convention issued the following decree: "Article I – From this moment until the enemy shall have been driven from the territory of the Republic, all the French people are in permanent requisition. Article II – The young men will go to battle, the married men will forge arms and transport munitions, the women will make tents and uniforms and will serve in the hospitals, the children will tear old linen into lint. The old men will be led to the public places to inflame the courage of the warriors." There was a levy of the whole people. Since then the army has undergone many changes, and the conception of a large active army – that is to say, a large army in barracks – has prevailed.

Jean Jaurès, the great Socialist orator, was indefatigable in pointing out the error of such a system. "It is not in a long period of compulsory military service which keeps the young men uselessly in the *casernes* that France will find salvation." Just before the War the period of military service was increased to three years, but this step did not increase the true strength of France. Since the War the Jaurès view has been widely accepted, and it is agreed even by the military men themselves

that six or nine, or at most, twelve months training is sufficient to make soldiers, who can then be kept in reserve. The eighteen months' service which was adopted after the War – though with an increase in the number of colonial troops – was certainly sufficient. Be it remembered that the system is wasteful not so much because of the actual cost of the army, but because in peace time far too many citizens are at a given moment abstracted from civilian life in a country which suffers from a shortage of man-power. While the young men are serving in the army, France is compelled to import labour. The effect of a prolonged absence from one's life-occupation at a particularly critical age is to lessen permanently the efficiency of the individual. His career is broken, he fails to learn, and sometimes he unlearns his trade. The contention of those who advocate a shorter period is that France will in no sense weaken herself militarily by such diminution. The short term theory is that covering troops need not be large provided the necessary *cadres* exist and the whole French manhood of fighting age has been trained and is available at a moment's notice under a sound mobilization scheme. The War, it is claimed, confirmed this theory. Wars are decided rather by the reservoir of trained civilians than by the size of the standing army; from the point of view of defence, one or two or three years' service is not a matter of great importance – what is of importance is that the entire nation should be available. On the other hand it is urged that the Colonial – which chiefly means black troops – and voluntary service troops should be increased, and that these professional soldiers should reinforce the covering troops. Too much stress has been laid on the strength of the active army and not enough on the strength of the potential army.

General Nollet, War Minister under M. Herriot, has been perfectly frank on this point. He recognizes that the reduction of military service is desirable socially and economically, but altogether apart from these reasons, purely technical military

considerations are invoked. There is a sense in which shorter military service will result in greater military efficiency. Nevertheless from the point of view of the military experts such a reduction must form part of a huge reorganization of the total forces of the country. He and the large body of experts who agree with him, are coming to accept the view of the Convention and of Jean Jaurès, that a military statute for the entire nation should be elaborated. It is in time of peace that there should be a preparation of the nation for a war of defence. There should not merely be fixed the rôle of the reserves, but there should be determined in advance the rational and intensive utilization of all the forces of the country. There should be a close collaboration in well-defined conditions between the men of science, the industrialists, the bankers, the commercial organizations – in a word, all the activities of the country in time of peace should be made adaptable to the exigences of war. Men and women of all ages and classes should, under an immense democratic scheme, have their places allotted to them. There should be no question of non-combatants in face of an aggressor.

Curiously enough this French idea has been particularly well expressed in America in a single sentence: "In the event of a declaration of war, the property, equally with the persons, lives and liberties of all citizens shall be subject to conscription for the defence of the nation." Both the Republican and the Democratic Parties cheered this proposal to the echo during the 1924 Presidential Campaign, and both the great parties made it a plank in their platform.

It may be objected that such a proposition implies a too-conscious preparation for war, but its protagonists, on the contrary, assert that it is the deliberate organization of peace. The argument is that if everybody was aware that his goods and his services would automatically be requisitioned by the State in the event of war, it would be impossible to arouse enthusiasm for a war of aggression. At present there are economic induce-

ments to war, and vested interests in war are quickly established. Strip war of its profits, make it impossible for any person to escape conscription of some kind or another, and the nation becomes at once efficient and pacific. There could be no financial exploitation of patriotism by the metallurgical magnates, by the contractors, by the bankers, by the workers – there could be no private interests but only the national interest. It is improbable that France or any other country will arrive at such a state of perfection for many years, but it is obvious that it is on these lines that France, and perhaps other countries, will proceed. When general disarmament is discussed, the French authorities have some such idea of national organization which would enable them to cut down with safety the army of instruction.

*

We are looking ahead. The principles on which the Army is founded to-day do not differ materially from those which obtained in 1913, when every able-bodied Frenchman without exception was liable to military service from 20 to 48 years of age. He had to serve three years in the active army, eleven years in the reserve of the active army, seven years in the territorial army and a final seven years in the reserve of the territorial army. The period of service after the first three years was negligible. In April 1923, active service of eighteen months was substituted. The annual contingents were called up in two sections – one in the month of May and the other in the month of November. The total period of liability to service remained unchanged. The latest official figures show the effectives of the French army to be nearly 700,000 men. They comprise nearly 400,000 by conscription, to which must be added about 90,000 volunteers. Then there are over 100,000 North African natives in the Regular Army, and 50,000 Colonial natives. Irregulars of Algeria and Morocco number over 10,000, and Syrian auxiliaries about 6,000. There are 13,000 men in the Foreign Legion.

The Gendarmerie and the Garde Républicaine are reckoned at about 30,000. These troops are thus (in round figures) distributed: 400,000 in the metropolitan country; 93,000 in Rhineland; 66,000 in Algeria and Tunisia; 85,000 in Morocco; 6,000 in the Sarre; 35,000 in Syria; and the rest scattered in various countries abroad.

It is understood that there have been still further reductions, and if the 1914 figures are taken, the comparison is favourable. The Army in peace time, according to the Annuaire Géneral of 1924, comprises: on French home territory and on the Rhine, 32 divisions each of three regiments of infantry, three groups of two batteries of light artillery, two groups of two batteries of heavy artillery, a squadron of cavalry, two companies of sappers, a company of telegraphists, a squadron of aviators. They are distributed in twenty regions of mobilization. There are three types of divisions: first there is the White Division, which has a normal strength of 7,000 men; second, there is a Mixed Division, comprising a regiment of White infantry and two native regiments, normally about 9,000 strong; third, there is the White Division of three regiments with reinforced effectives, numbering about 8,000 men. The ordinary White Divisions are twenty in number, each affected to a particular territorial region. There are six Mixed Divisions and there are six Reinforced Divisions constituting the Army of the Rhine. The ordinary infantry regiment is composed of 1,500 men and, reinforced, the regiment numbers 2,100 men. The Mixed Regiments number 2,400 men of whom 480 are of the white race. The regiments are divided into three battalions each of four companies. There are sixteen Army Corps. It should, however, be understood that outside these divisions there are many elements numbering 163,000 men, and there are besides various army services and the personnel of the schools representing about 50,000 other men. Generally one may note that the metropolitan cavalry has been reduced to about half as compared with 1914. Tank

battalions show a tendency to increase. The importance that France attaches to the development of the aeroplane can hardly be exaggerated. Much of the material is doubtless old, but France could easily put into the air a force of 1,250 machines – a number which should soon be increased to 2,000. There is even talk of an ultimate expansion of the air force to 8,000 machines, but that day is far off. Be it remembered too that the Navy is being served by hydroplanes. Unquestionably France is the strongest air power in the world and she is giving special attention to all new developments, is constantly experimenting, and could quickly adapt civilian machines to warlike purposes. In one way or another about 30,000 men are trained in this arm of the military service. Attempts are being made to develop pilotless aeroplanes manœuvred by wireless, dropping bombs at any given point. The possibilities of the aeroplane are recognized by the French to be tremendous. The notion that the air forces are directed against England – as certain British statesmen suggested – has always seemed to me absurd, but I cordially endorse the plea first put forward by my friend Captain Fonck, the distinguished airman, for an Entente in the Air.

One observes, too, an increase in the last few years in engineers, from 165 companies to 207; and on the other hand a decrease in heavy and field artillery – 1,244 batteries in 1920 and only 798 now.

The direction of the National Defence is assured by the Government assisted by the Superior Council of National Defence which comprises, under the presidency of the Prime Minister, the War Minister, the Naval Minister, the Colonial Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Public Works. There are also the Vice-Presidents of the Superior Councils of the Army and of the Navy, together with high functionaries, marshals and generals. Each member of the Superior Council

of War, nominated by decree, has a staff whose composition is fixed by the War Minister. While the War Minister is President of the Superior Council of War, the Vice-President is regarded as the Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies. At present Marshal Pétain is the Vice-President and therefore the effective Chief of the Army; while Marshals Joffre, Foch, Lyautey, Franchet d'Esperey and Fayolle are members, together with divisional generals such as Gouraud, Mangin and Degoutte. Officers are appointed by decree. They are usually recruited from students in the College of St. Cyr or the Polytechnique, or if they come from the ranks, must have followed the courses in the Colleges of Saint-Maixent, Saumur or Versailles.

*

France, who used to pride herself upon her naval strength, allowed herself to fall to a low rank in this respect. During the War her whole efforts were directed towards the strengthening of the Army, and it was to the British that the task of patrolling the seas chiefly fell. The Navy was neglected and for some years after the War no attempt was made to bring it back to its former relative strength. Its inferiority as compared with the navies of all other great powers was acknowledged freely in Parliamentary debates. From 1914 to 1922 Great Britain launched 333 ships, the United States 392, Japan 121, Italy 79, and France only 31. The French Navy, it is no exaggeration to say, did not possess a single battleship of modern fighting value. In 1925 the whole tonnage of the French Navy was put at 145,000, which is 30,000 tons less than authorized by the Washington Agreements. Moreover, when it was suggested that a big battleship with up-to-date equipment should be built, it was almost unanimously conceded that France could not afford to spend 500,000,000 francs on one battleship when such a sum would suffice to build over forty submarines of 1,000 tons each. The whole concensus of opinion is that the Navy having declined and the French State

being so poor, France should concentrate her efforts on the construction of cruisers, hydroplanes, air-ships and submarines – and particularly submarines. The building of capital ships is, in view of the financial situation, hardly immediately possible.

That there should be a reconstruction is agreed, but this reconstruction must be spread over twenty years. The plan is to spend during the next twenty years 10 milliard francs, and the naval programme calls for a high sea fleet consisting of 178,000 tons of battleships, 360,000 tons of cruisers and destroyers, 65,000 tons of submarines or about 90,000 tons if submarines purely for coastal defence are included, and about 150,000 tons of special vessels such as seaplane-carriers, oil-tankers, mine-layers, submarine supply ships and floating workshops. In 1925 credits amounting to 1,300,000,000 francs were submitted to the Chamber of Deputies for the French Navy, and of this sum only 500,000,000 francs were to be expended for the construction of new ships excluding ships of the line, the building of which will only be resumed in 1932. A considerable portion of the credits will also be devoted to the reorganization of the French shipbuilding yards, which were practically idle for eight years. It is also found necessary to increase the pay of the sailors and improve the conditions of their life at sea in order to attract a larger number of volunteers.

France's greatest concern is the reinforcement of her Mediterranean Squadron, which is in many respects greatly inferior to the Italian Fleet. What France particularly desires is to secure unmolested transport across the Mediterranean for the masses of coloured African troops who already represent a large proportion of France's land fighting forces, and will undoubtedly represent a still larger proportion in the near future. The construction of submarines and light craft is unrestricted by the Washington Convention, and the French naval authorities take the view that a large number of such vessels will be able to

control the Mediterranean waters in face of any opposing forces of battleships. Necessity has helped to bring the French to this extremely favourable opinion of the submarine, but the theory once adopted has now become almost an article of the French naval creed. In any case, even those who still believe in the necessity of big battleships, acknowledge that there must be a vast transformation, and that the battleship of the future must be far better protected against attacks from the air and by submarines, and that problems are posed which cannot be resolved in the present transition stage. Moreover it is pointed out that France does not possess the necessary equipment to construct a unity of 35,000 tons of the type authorized by the accords of Washington. It is necessary first to reconstruct the ship-yards. It is also necessary to make many experiments and to pursue studies which have been altogether neglected. In short, France has practically abandoned any hope of possessing a fleet of first-rate importance to-day – regarding the present fleet merely as an instrument for the training of personnel – and merely looks forward to the possibility of renovating her fleet some years hence.

In 1914 the budget of the Marine absorbed 16·50 per cent. of the total budget. That proportion has fallen to 9·40 per cent. By July 1929 it is hoped to add to the French Navy 4 light cruisers, 15 destroyers, 18 torpedo boats, 28 submarines, 8 mine-layers and a few other auxiliary vessels. The coasts of France and of Algeria and Tunisia are divided, from the administrative point of view, into six maritime arrondissements – Cherbourg, Brest, Lorient, Rochefort, Toulon and Bizerte, with sous-arrondissements at Dunkerque, Le Hâvre, St. Servan, Nantes (including St. Nazaire), Bordeaux, Marseilles and Algiers. The Conseil Supérieur de la Marine was reorganized at the end of 1921, and comprises besides the Minister of Marine the Chef d'État Major Général and four Vice-Admirals. There are about 55,000 sailors, of whom only half are actually affected

to ships and the officers number about 3,700. Efforts are being made to develop naval aviation. At present there are 50 naval aviation squadrons and the Marine also possesses two rigid airships.

FRANCE is troubled about the low birthrate. For many years it has been remarked that while the neighbours of France multiply, the population of France remains practically stationary. At the census in 1921 the French population was 39,209,660, and this included 1,709,749 Alsace-Lorrainers. As compared with 1911 these figures reveal a diminution of nearly 400,000. Even if one goes back as far as 1866 one finds that there were 38,067,064 inhabitants of France. There have, it is true, been fluctuations, but since the beginning of the twentieth century the population has hovered about 39,000,000.

The earliest estimates of French population made by Vauban in 1700 gave a figure of nearly 20,000,000, and there was a steady growth until the middle of the last century, when suddenly France was stricken with stagnation. One cannot altogether accept the calculations which tend to show that France would be richer by 4,000,000 human lives if the Great War had not been fought. Nevertheless, it is clear that it is only by an inflow of foreigners and the addition of the recovered provinces that France manages to maintain her stability. The official estimates published by the International Labour Bureau reveal that Germany lost 2,000,000 soldiers, Russia 1,700,000, Austria-Hungary 1,542,000, France 1,400,000, Italy 750,000, Great Britain 744,000 and the United States 68,000. This means that France occupies the unenviable first place for the percentage of her active masculine population killed during the War. The percentage is 10·5 for France, 9·8 for Germany, 9·5 for Austria-Hungary, 6·2 for Italy, 5·1 for England, and 0·2 for the United States. The number of mutilated is equally impressive. Germany has 1,537,000 mutilated men, France 1,500,000, England 900,000, Italy 800,000, Russia 775,000 and the United States 157,000. The percentages in relation to the active masculine population are 11·2 for France, 7·5 for Germany, 6·6 for Eng-

land and 0·5 for the United States. Relatively, therefore, it will be observed that France has suffered the most, and France of all countries could least afford these losses because of her unfortunate desire to shirk the duties of parenthood. In 1924 the number of births was 752,101, of deaths 679,885, of marriages, 355,923, of divorces, 21,023. There were thus 72,216 more births than deaths. This shows a heavy drop from 1923 when births outnumbered deaths by 94,871; and a still heavier drop as compared with 1921 when the balance was 117,023. A reference to 1920 makes the case worse, for there were in that year 159,790 more births than deaths.

While the population of France to-day is lower than it was in 1911, countries like Belgium, Germany and Italy, in spite of the War, are increasing in population, and from the point of view of her political and economic power France has indeed reason to be perturbed. The average annual birth-rate from 1901–11 was 203 per 10,000; in 1923 it was 194; and in 1924, 192. After the War there was a remarkable increase in marriages. In 1919 and in 1920 – which may be regarded as the years of demobilization – there were 552,683 and 623,869 marriages, but immediately afterwards there was a falling off, and now the annual average may be put at about 350,000. It is to be observed that in the ten largest towns of France the birth-rate is consistently lower than the death-rate. It is in the north, the north-east and in Alsace-Lorraine that one finds the highest birth-rates, and in Brittany, too, the birth-rate is fairly high. In the Valleys of the Garonne and the Rhone, in Burgundy and in the Pyrenees the birth-rate is exceedingly low. If the large towns grow in size it is owing to a displacement of the population.

There is no subject which is so much discussed, and although certain governmental measures have been taken, there is little hope of any improvement. There is reason to believe that methods of contraception and even of abortion are more widely known and practised in France than in other countries. En-

couragement of families by money grants seems somewhat futile, for the sums awarded are pitifully small – about 90 francs a year. There are indeed various fiscal privileges granted to families in which there are three or more children, and in some industries there are special allowances over and above wages for *charges de famille*. Public and private funds set aside for combating the evil of depopulation are estimated to amount to about a milliard francs annually, but in spite of the generosity of private persons and of associations, it is at least doubtful whether the smallest difference is made by such so-called financial encouragement. A report which was drawn up by the Alliance Nationale pour l'Accroissement de la Population Française effectively demonstrates that large families which used to be common are now extremely exceptional in France, and the causes of this decline are attributed to the disappearance of religious belief and social changes, which make it more difficult for the average couple to bring up a family in modern conditions. It may be remarked parenthetically that Frenchmen in high situations certainly do not set an example to the country. Since 1913 there has been one married President of the Republic, who was childless, and another who was a bachelor, while a recent Cabinet numbered nineteen Ministers who had only twenty-two children among them. The *Alliance Nationale* contends that if the active population, that is to say the number of Frenchmen and Frenchwomen between the ages of 20 and 60, is not to diminish, there should be 900,000 births every year. In fact, the births in round figures may be put at 750,000. As the number of marriages is likely to be about 300,000 a year for a long time to come, each *ménage* should have three children. The statistics show that out of 11,696,663 families no fewer than 1,686,915 have no children at all; while 3,011,026 have one child, 2,557,942 have two children. Families with three children are in round figures one million and a half; and with four, fewer than 890,000.

Among the proposals which are made is the institution of the family vote. The father should be allowed to cast a vote for each child. A whole series of advantages, such as State responsibility for the provision of adequate *logement*, pensions for each child, special grants, the extension of what is called the family *sur-salaire*, and State insurance for widows and orphans should be offered. Needless to say it is not likely that much progress in this direction will be made, but the fact that such expedients are regarded with favour by the authorities indicates the seriousness with which the situation is viewed.

M. Léon Bailby, an influential publicist, in a striking article, asked if despite vigorous campaigns and well-organized propaganda, any advance has really been made, and he replied emphatically to his own question in the negative. "The figures are not secret," he writes, "the whole world is privy to them. And we can imagine the pleasure with which they are read in prolific Germany where the birth-rate increases steadily, and where within a few years there will be a population of 80,000,000 as against 30,000,000 in France."

One must make allowance for a certain amount of exaggeration, but it is not surprising that he should conclude that all the protocols in the world and all the dreams of peace will not alter the moral as well as the material disequilibrium which exists between the two neighbouring peoples "of whom one, with a territory of nearly 450,000,000 square kilometres, will have to feed 80,000,000, while the other will have no more than 30,000,000 to nourish upon a productive territory of almost equal extent."

"It is impossible," he continues, "not to be struck by the increasing demoralization which is one of the causes of the evil. An admirable moral reaction seemed to have begun in France on the morrow of the War. Death, grief, danger, brought us closer together. Thence came that religious re-awakening which some perverse politicians deplore, although it remains one of the last

brakes on the descent. It is only our Catholic provinces that have not ceased to procreate."

*

It has already been pointed out that for some years there has been not only an absence of unemployment in France, but a lack of man-power, and that employers are loudly crying out for workers. It follows that there must be a considerable immigration movement. The movement is not altogether new, though it has taken an extension since the War that is unprecedented. It may well be that immigration and the extraordinary power of assimilation of France – that is to say, of transforming foreigners into good Frenchmen within a generation – will largely correct the tendency towards depopulation. France may yet experience an industrial crisis, but even though economic conditions may be temporarily adverse, the general situation is that France is able to find more work than can be performed by Frenchmen. The unemployment relief funds established in France were hardly touched during 1923 and 1924. There must necessarily always be a small number of unemployed due to local conditions, but the average weekly returns are under a thousand. On the whole there has been an acute shortage of labour. Here and there from time to time one discovers trades which languish, but in the principal industries the employers are rather compelled to practise a sort of industrial Malthusianism.

It is estimated that there are about 3,000,000 aliens in France, and that foreigners pour into the country at the rate of 6,000 a week. There are jobs waiting for all of them. The estimates show that there are established in France 700,000 Italians, 550,000 Spaniards, 500,000 Belgians, 400,000 Russians, 200,000 Poles, 100,000 Portuguese, 70,000 English, 60,000 Americans, 60,000 Swiss, 25,000 Luxemburgers, 15,000 Germans, 15,000 Greeks, 15,000 Roumanians, besides 100,000 coloured Colonials from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Even these figures should

be taken to be rather indicative than accurate, for they are swelling rapidly and there are agencies which stimulate the influx. Obviously it will be necessary to regulate immigration. It would be wrong to stem the tide, but the admission cannot be haphazard as at present. There is, however, little fear that immigration will destroy the individuality of France or damage her culture and her patriotism. The example of the United States, where many nations have been thrown into the melting-pot and have produced a homogeneous race, is there to show that there is no danger while there exists a genuine demand for man-power. The American spirit, as a French observer, M. Ludovic Naudeau, has pointed out, has only grown more intense, and American patriotism and American pride have not suffered from the fact that the United States has been built up largely on excess European populations. For a long time entry to the United States was entirely unrestricted, and although a stage has been reached at which America must strictly limit further immigration and must control the inflow, that stage has not yet been reached by France.

What is proposed, however, is that these foreign residents in France should not be allowed to settle in too great numbers in particular localities; otherwise there will be formed national agglomerations preserving the habits and the speech of their forefathers. Perhaps America itself has not given sufficient attention to this matter, but in France it is realized that it would be against the interests of the country to permit the founding of foreign colonies. What is needed is a process of absorption. On the other hand, if France were openly to profess her intention of permanently adopting these immigrants, there might be protests from foreign countries, and any methods of preventing a concentration of foreigners in groups will have to be tactfully applied. There should above all be a simplified process of naturalization. Moreover, in order to encourage the marriage of Frenchwomen with the best elements among the immigrants, it

should be arranged that a French wife should not lose her nationality.

The French trade unions, although not offering any opposition, are naturally alive to the possibility of foreign workers bringing down the rate of wages. The authorities and the employers, on the other hand, are somewhat afraid of foreign agitators being brought into the country. French labour is contented enough, and while conditions of prosperity prevail, is not likely to create trouble. But foreign workers without roots in the country may easily introduce discordant elements and may, it is argued, lead a revolt. It is suggested that Communism largely derives whatever strength it possesses from the restless alien. Thus there are many grave problems which arise from this new invasion of France.

Occasionally there are signs of xenophobia, and even the French governments are sufficiently demagogic to arouse indignation against the foreigner. Generally, however, the French authorities and the French people are sensible enough, and while there is this dearth of labour, and while other doors are closed to the Slavs and the Latin races, they will continue to turn their steps towards France. They are to be found in special trades – the Italians, for example, are chiefly engaged in building operations and in railway work; the Poles are recruited for the mining and metallurgical industries; the Belgians are textile and engineering workers, and are mostly in the north and in the region of Paris; the Spaniards congregate in the Midi and in Central France – in the oil refineries and the soap factories of Marseilles, and in the mines of the Loire. Agricultural occupations attract a good percentage of many nationalities. In the département of Gers alone, as Professor Joseph Barthélemy pointed out, in a lecture before the Société d'Economie Politique, 2,500 farms have been abandoned, the district having lost between 1911 and 1924 18,000 agriculturists. Since the War 50,000 hectares have lain fallow. It is essential, therefore, that

to these départements and to similar regions immigrants should bring their productive labour. In passing, it should be noted that Professor Barthélemy lays particular stress on the need of compelling boys born in France to perform their military service in the French Army, regardless of their nationality. At present they may opt as they please, and the result is that of 100,000 sons born of foreigners in France, only 1,300 joined the military classes of 1921–3. Nobody wants an unnaturalized floating foreign population, and nobody wants the children of foreigners who have settled in France and obtain their sustenance from France, to preserve the nationality of their parents.

Some attempt has been made to systematize the introduction of foreign workers by the Minister of Labour, and on all the frontiers, as well as in the important centres, there are depôts whose duty it is to direct to their destination the industrial immigrants. Agreements have been concluded with a number of foreign countries by which the French authorities undertake to supervise wages and working conditions. In 1919 there were agreements made with Poland and with Italy; in 1920 there was an agreement arrived at with Czecho-Slovakia; in 1921 there was an agreement with Belgium, and other countries have followed suit. Provision has been made for equality of treatment of immigrants with French workers. An attempt was made to introduce British workers at a time when unemployment was rife in England, but the British worker did not accommodate himself to the Continental conditions. The habits with regard to food and to housing were found altogether different, and the wages, as expressed in francs, though furnishing sufficient for the needs of the workers, appeared ridiculously small when converted into British money. The experiment may be described as a failure, but at the same time, in a more unorganized manner, large numbers of Englishmen find their way to France and obtain employment. There are the closest relations between

the French authorities and the authorities of other countries, and the French employers make specific demands which are passed on to the Italian, the Polish, the Czecho-Slovakian and the Belgian Governments. It is sufficient to produce a certified labour contract to obtain admission at the frontier.

But apart altogether from the organized immigration, there is a steady drift over the frontiers, and it is probable that the figures which have been given considerably underestimate the number of foreign workers, since thousands of them are unregistered.

*

There is another class of foreigner in France, namely the tourist and the foreigner of easy means who prefers to live abroad. The tourist and the foreign resident are to be found everywhere. In Paris, which depends very largely upon the visitor, it is estimated that there are at any given moment at least 700,000 out of a population of fewer than 3,000,000. The Riviera appears to be almost entirely occupied by the foreigner. The coasts of Normandy and of Brittany are overrun by foreigners. The resorts of the Centre are equally frequented by foreigners. Most Frenchmen realize that it would be foolish to attempt to check this movement, for tourism must occupy a high place among the industries of France. A large number of luxury trades and hotels are particularly interested in the tourist and would be bankrupt without him – and her. The Office National du Tourisme does a useful work in facilitating travel and in co-ordinating the attitude and the action of a variety of hotel, restaurant and shop keepers. In a typical year it is estimated that American tourists alone in Europe spend a sum in the neighbourhood of three hundred million dollars (£66,079,000). The majority of these tourists pass most of their time in France. England and Italy and Germany may be visited *en passant*, but the bulk of this money is certainly spent in France.

Here is one of the invisible exports of France, for sums expended in this manner, though not figuring in the trade statistics, must be regarded as a clear addition to the credit side of the French commercial balance sheet. As many as 300,000 American tourists come in a single summer, and the number is always on the increase. The richer visitors may spend hundreds of thousands of francs, and the average, according to the bankers and shipping agents, is about 20,000 francs. Figures given by the American Express Company are that the amount of business transacted by this Company alone in 1923 in Europe was 2,225,000,000 francs, and in 1924, 2,492,000,000 francs. Passage money must be deducted, but there remains a total of at least a milliard francs. The franc is greatly influenced by this factor, and would have fallen very much lower had it not been for the tourist.

Nor are the Americans the only travellers who spend considerable sums on the Continent. The British cross over in tremendous numbers and spend millions of pounds in the course of the year. Then there is the large and wealthy contingent of visitors from the Argentine and other South American Republics. It is impossible to compute with any accuracy the grand total of their spendings, but it certainly cannot be left out of account by any sensible French government which tries to fix the status of the foreigner. The various vexatious proposals for anti-alien legislation that are put forward from time to time are incredibly stupid, but they never pass into law. Now and again there is actually an agitation for the suppression of foreign banks in France, and inconveniences which would have the effect of discouraging the visitor are urged by narrow-minded and prejudiced Frenchmen – municipal councils and deputies – who do not understand the interests of their country, and who try to determine a wave of xenophobia. There can of course be no objection to a reasonable *taxe de séjour*, although Paris has refused to adopt it. Some of the health and tourist centres in

the country make fairly large profits by the imposition of this tax. In an ordinary year I find that the total revenue from this source was over 13,000,000 francs. Nice headed the list, with a sum of over 2,000,000 francs, then comes Vichy with 1,000,000 francs, and Biarritz, Cannes, Mentone and Aix-les-Bains follow.

It must be confessed that the formalities for foreigners in France are not very onerous, and the French themselves claim that in their application the rules cannot even be compared with the rules of England and of America. Nevertheless there is a good reason for this leniency, and when a new Minister of the Interior who is desirous of putting on record some drastic decree, endeavours to bring into operation fresh restrictions, there is an immediate outcry, not from the foreigner but from the big dressmakers, the jewellers, the proprietors of hotels and restaurants and other Frenchmen who specially benefit by the coming and going of the visitor. Invariably the Minister of the Interior is compelled to climb down. There was issued, for example, in 1924, a decree which was designed to change entirely the status of visitors, but its application was long delayed and, in fact, all kinds of concessions in practice were admitted which deprived the decree of any real sting. Under the old régime tourists were obliged to ask for an identity card only when their sojourn in France was expected to exceed two months – and as was to be anticipated, two months became an exceedingly elastic period. But M. Chautemps decided that the period should be reduced to fifteen days and, moreover, that the application for a card should be made within forty-eight hours of landing. Now neither the British nor the American visitor usually speaking imperfectly the language of the country, is disposed to attend the police station or the mairie and supply photographs and give proofs of the date and place of his parents' birth, the name, age and nationality of his dependents, and so forth. The traveller can hardly be expected

to carry such documentary evidence about with him, nor can he, as a rule, furnish the names of two French citizens who will consent to act as his guarantors if he contemplates a long residence.

The regulations as drawn up were exceedingly strict: they provided for immediate notice of any change of residence, and in the event of neglect to comply with the regulations, expulsion was threatened. Naturally the effect of this decree cabled all round the world was to check tourism. The Minister was besieged with protests, and the Conseil Supérieur du Tourisme unanimously adopted the following resolution, which well expresses the general French point of view and may therefore be quoted:

"That the fear of having to wait in administrative offices for Identity Cards will keep away a large part of the present contingent of tourists; that the card formalities, regarded as a serious nuisance, will interfere with the considerable circulation of money spent in France by foreigners, who will go elsewhere; that the new regulations, which are held to be vexatious by foreign tourists, have attracted the most unfavourable comment in the countries which send us the greater number of our visitors; that the attention of the Government be called to the consequences of the new regulations on the economic position of the country by reducing the amount of money brought in by tourists, an amount estimated at thousands of millions of francs; that the new regulations concerning foreign tourists in France be therefore cancelled, and that the *status quo ante* be maintained." In short, the pressure which was brought upon the Government was so strong that it was necessary to renounce this curious campaign, and although some of the regulations were not altogether abandoned in theory, the local authorities were enjoined not to insist upon them except in the case of undoubtedly undesirable persons. The formalities, it was agreed, could be fulfilled through the intermediary of hotel

porters and other employees, and thus became nonsensical.

Whether France likes it or not, she has to remember that she is a country which in a peculiar sense depends upon the foreign visitor and the immigrant.

Chapter 6

CHURCH AND STATE

ONE had thought that religious controversies had ended in France, but there has been a revival of the old struggle, and it becomes necessary therefore to deal briefly with the clash of Anti-Clericalists and of Roman Catholics. Perhaps, however, one should not convey the impression that the parties to the conflict are clearly defined and can be ranged as religious and as anti-religious. There are many Roman Catholics who are resolutely anti-Clerical. There are many Roman Catholics who approve of the complete separation of Church and State. There are even Roman Catholics who are opposed to the representation of France at the Vatican on the ground that the power of the Pope should be purely spiritual and not temporal. There has undoubtedly been a good deal of interference by foreign clergy in the national policy and it is perhaps a pity that the opportunity was lost of instituting – or at any rate reviving – a national non-Roman Catholic Church. Even those former French rulers who were most ruthless in their opposition to the Huguenots because the Huguenots tended to become a State within a State, also showed hostility to the domination of Rome. If they felt that they could not afford to do without the Church they endeavoured to check the undue political influence of the Church.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century the Pope proclaimed his supremacy over kings, and the reply of the French King was to confiscate the property of French Bishops and to send an expedition against the Pope. A French Archbishop was elected Pope, and Avignon was made the capital of Christendom. The attempt to set up a Gallic Church failed after the experiment had been tried for three-quarters of a century, but throughout the history of France one may find instances of revolts against Clericalism. One would also find that in spite of these revolts Italian Monarchies, Italian Ministers, Austrian Armies and

other foreign forces were allowed to play far too prominent a part in French affairs. Even Joan of Arc may be rightly regarded as a rebel against Rome. François I and Louis XIV among the kings, and Rabelais, Montaigne, Voltaire and Renan showed themselves in their different ways anti-clerical and expressed the true attitude of the nation towards the absolutism of priest rule. There is, then, no antinomy between religion and anti-Clericalism, and France is not necessarily anti-religious because she has always been ready to make war on the Church. If France has been called "the eldest daughter of the Church," she has proved a most difficult and unruly daughter.

At the same time, the exigences of politics have always given considerable power to the Vatican and to the priests in France. Still, it had been thought that the bitterness which has frequently marked the relations of the Church and the State during the lifetime of the Third Republic had been obliterated by the War. There seemed to be no real politico-religious problem in France until the Radicals came into office in 1924. The Radicals, remembering the fierce contests which were provoked during the Combes Ministry, recalling the series of unpleasant incidents which resulted in the triumph of the Anti-Clericals, were tempted to revive what seemed to be a dead issue. When as Prime Minister M. Herriot declared his intention of discontinuing diplomatic relations with the Vatican, his declaration was not at first taken very seriously. It was asserted that the Vatican does not need France so much as France needs the Vatican. But, although the hands of the Radical Government were tied by the complications which arose from the peculiar position of Alsace-Lorraine, they stuck to their point and omitted from the Budget the necessary credits for the maintenance of an Embassy at the Vatican. Nobody can deny that the Vatican has shown remarkable activity since the War. Its diplomatic grip over a number of Central European countries has been strengthened. The tendency had been to recognize the use that France could

properly make of friendship with the Pope. Moreover the French Roman Catholic priests had shown their intense patriotism by serving gallantly in the ranks in the War. It is estimated that out of perhaps 36,000 Roman Catholic priests 25,000 were in the fighting line or were assisting their country in other ways. Only 300 of them were chaplains.

Although it was sometimes complained that the Vatican, which was placed during the War in a difficult situation, did not take the side of France, the behaviour of the priests unquestionably produced a reaction in favour of the Church, and it was somewhat surprising that M. Herriot, though standing for the traditional policy of the Third Republic, should endeavour to reverse the move towards conciliation that had been made by his predecessors. Before the French Revolution the Catholic Church was supreme in France and had exceptional legal rights. The Revolution naturally severed the bond between the Roman Catholic Church and the State, and for some years there was a real separation. Then came Napoleon who, in spite of his quarrels with the Church, saw clearly the value of an alliance with the Vatican to consolidate by diplomatic methods the position he had acquired by a succession of military victories. A Concordat was signed by Napoleon and Pope Pius VII in 1803 which guaranteed the salaries of certain of the clergy, while the nomination of priests was subject to governmental approval. Although the Protestants and the Jews were recognized and tolerated, the place of honour was given to the Roman Catholic Church and the faith of the great majority of the French people.

Until 1906 this Concordat governed the relations between France and the Vatican, although long before that date Republicanism was at variance with Catholicism. Republicanism in the minds of Republicans has come to be identified with Anti-Clericalism and with Secularism. It is alleged that the political influence of Roman Catholicism has been uniformly on the side of monarchical reaction and in opposition to the Republic.

Napoleon III was greatly indebted to the Clericals, and he repaid the debt by keeping French troops at the Vatican. The earlier Republicans after the downfall of Napoleon III were divided into two camps. There were those Republicans who hankered after a Restoration: they for the most part threw in their lot with the Clericals. There were the sincere Republicans who naturally exclaimed with Gambetta: "Le Cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi!"

*

It would be superfluous in this place to trace the history of the relations of the Third Republic with the Vatican and with the Clericals. Suffice it to say that various laws restricting Roman Catholic influence in the schools were passed between 1886 and 1901 and these were followed a few years later by the Separation Law, which brought the Concordat to an end and abolished State support of religion. It took from Rome the possession of Church property in France and vested it in the hands of Associations for Religious Worship. There were other measures, such as the expulsion of unauthorized congregations – or religious orders. The passage of time drew a veil over this troubled period and when, after the War, the Pope acquired a greater diplomatic prestige, French Governments saw the advantage for the pursuance of their own policies in Europe of a reconciliation with the Vatican. In 1913 fourteen nations were represented at the Vatican, and five Papal Nuncios were abroad. In 1923 no fewer than twenty-five nations had representation at the Court of St. Peter with as many Papal Nuncios in the various countries. Furthermore the recovered provinces of Alsace-Lorraine seemed to make it incumbent on France to enter into negotiations with Rome. The Concordat had never been denounced in Alsace-Lorraine for the simple reason that Alsace-Lorraine at the time of the separation was under German laws. In Alsace-Lorraine there were probably a million and a half Roman Catholics and a most powerful Clerical Party. It

was believed that if Alsace-Lorraine were to be morally, as well as politically, recovered, a complete change in the French attitude towards Rome was essential. In Roman Catholic Poland French influence was to some extent dependent upon a French agreement with the Pope. In Rhineland the Vatican recognized as Aumônier Général – a high official of the Church – a French Bishop instead of the German ecclesiastics who combated France. The Sarre, too, came by an arrangement with the Vatican, under French religious control. In the French zone of Morocco the nomination of a French Bishop was approved, although previously the recruitment of the clergy throughout Morocco was a privilege of the Spanish religious authorities. In the Near East where France has certain ambitions – notably in Syria – France secured various moral advantages for the French religious establishments which had not been previously accorded by the Vatican. In other parts of the world French policy, it was believed, could be furthered by the friendlier recognition of missionaries and religious schools. Altogether France was prepared to pay a price for the co-operation of the Vatican, which was held to be needful. There was a project of law specifically authorizing the return of the principal Congregations, and a Nuncio was sent to Paris to negotiate an agreement which would put the Church on a more legal footing by the constitution of Associations Diocésaines. During the Premiership of M. Millerand in 1920, in spite of the opposition of anti-Clerical Socialists, a French Ambassador at Rome was proposed – not, it was explained, to bring to an end the separation of Church and State, but in recognition of the great moral power of the Vatican. It was not until 1921, when M. Briand was Prime Minister, that ratification for a Vatican Ambassador was finally secured.

Curious reflections on the whirligig of the years are provoked by the fact that M. Millerand and M. Briand, both of whom had been conspicuous figures in the liquidation of the Congrega-

tions and the anti-Vatican policy of previous years, were now equally conspicuous in returning to the "policy of presence."

It seemed that the religious war had definitely closed, but in 1924 the Radicals and the Socialists, largely in order to find a common platform and to divert attention from other problems, announced that they intended to use their power to carry out a three-fold programme. The Ambassador to the Vatican was to be withdrawn and accordingly the Papal Nuncio at Paris could hardly be maintained. The existing laws which applied to religious congregations were to be more strictly enforced and there were to be expelled from France all unauthorized Catholic societies. In Alsace-Lorraine purely secular teaching, such as obtains in the rest of France, was to be introduced; and religious teaching such as is given in the Confessional schools of Alsace-Lorraine was to be excluded. There were violent remonstrances and the Cardinal Archbishops of France penned a challenging letter to the Prime Minister. The Radicals were put upon the defensive and protested that they were unjustly accused of religious intolerance. There was, they declared, no desire to interfere with the practice of religion, but it was necessary either to enforce the laws or to change the laws and not allow them to be laxly interpreted. As for the embassy at the Vatican, the view was taken that the Vatican cannot be regarded as possessing temporal power. It is not a State and cannot be treated as a State.

It should be observed, too, that not only was there some resentment against the pretensions of the Vatican as the protector of France, but there was, in fact, a change of diplomatic direction which made Vatican assistance no longer necessary for France, at any rate in Europe. There were no longer in France grandiose schemes for the encirclement of a Protestant Prussia by a number of Catholic States. There was, at least in the beginning, a spirit of Internationalism which was at variance with the employment of the Vatican as a weapon, and there was opposed to

the Catholicism of the Vatican the Internationalism of the League of Nations. The League of Nations, one may say, was looked upon as a sort of non-religious Vatican. Alsace-Lorraine could not, it was argued, remain for ever a State within a State with laws which differed from the laws of the rest of France; it had necessarily to be assimilated.

Undoubtedly there was much force in many of the Radical contentions, although the strife was inopportune. France had need of unity in the extremely critical days which were before her. She should have applied all her attention to more pressing problems; she could not afford to divide the nation and to indulge in the luxury of any kind of civil warfare. But just as the Salvation Army cannot live without the Devil, so the Radical Party could hardly exist without the "enemy" of Clericalism. There was the liveliest battle, which resulted in the suppression of credits for the Embassy by the French Chamber in 1925. At the same time the Prime Minister was obliged to make one concession to the Nationalists, who had become associated with the Catholics. The Conseil d'État decided juridically that Alsace-Lorraine, contrary to the thesis of the Government, was still under the régime of the Concordat, and therefore, until Parliament chooses to denounce the Concordat for Alsace-Lorraine, the recovered provinces must be represented at the Vatican. M. Herriot seems to have been unaware of the difficulties which would arise in respect of Alsace-Lorraine. Indeed, there are those who doubt whether there will ever be an effective severance of relations between the Vatican and France as a whole. The motives which animated the French Government were exclusively parliamentary and were based upon the exigences of the internal political situation in France.

The point of view of Italy is of interest in this connection. Generally, Italian opinion has ceased to regard the Vatican as an enemy of United Italy, and looks upon it as an asset to the country. The Quirinal and the Vatican are on friendly terms,

and Mussolini has frequently laid stress upon the value of the Church. There has been a considerable change in the attitude of the public authorities towards the Holy See, and anti-Clericalism in Italy is frowned upon. It would seem that Italy is even more concerned about the withdrawal of the French Embassy than is France, and the remarkable speech made in the French Chamber by M. Briand for the retention of the Embassy was read in Italy with enthusiasm. Everything depends upon whether it is correct to state that the Vatican is one of the most important places in the world for the making of European policies. If it is, then statesmen, whatever may be their private religious views, whatever may be their likes or dislikes, are rendering France no service in deserting this meeting-place of many nations. If the Vatican has, in fact, lost its influence, then the French Government is right to remain aloof. The diplomatic danger is that a number of small nations who do not obtain all the consideration that they desire at the Vatican, and who grouped themselves around France, may now be compelled to group themselves around some other Power.

*

If in France generally there was no need to take the quarrel too seriously, in Alsace-Lorraine, on the other hand, a serious revolt against the mother country was threatened. These provinces were restored to France by the Treaty of Versailles. Promises were made by Marshal Joffre, by M. Millerand, by M. Poincaré and by others that there would be no sudden and drastic change of the régime under which the inhabitants lived during a half-century of German rule. When there was prospect of these promises being broken, the joy with which the Alsace-Lorrainers returned to France was changed into something like dismay. There was even talk of active resistance. At any rate, passive resistance and a revulsion of feeling in the restored provinces against France was inevitable.

Alsace-Lorraine under German administration enjoyed privi-

leges which would not be enjoyed under French administration if the provinces were assimilated in the full sense. Since the restoration France has been content to allow Alsace-Lorraine to continue to exercise the privileges possessed when the provinces were regarded as German. Obviously an end must sooner or later be made of the anomaly of permitting French territories to live under laws which are not French. From the beginning it was inevitable that difficulties would arise the moment it was decided to Frenchify Alsace-Lorraine. The inhabitants of these provinces, however genuine may be their regard for France, naturally desire to retain their customs. For nearly fifty years Alsace-Lorraine owed allegiance to Germany. The language spoken is chiefly German. In spite of this the population kept its sympathies with France. If a plebiscite had been held at the moment of the Peace Conference there is no doubt that the people would have voted in overwhelming numbers for the adoption of French nationality. Nobody who has the most superficial acquaintance with them could doubt their fundamental loyalty to France. This is in itself a remarkable fact, a striking proof that it is almost impossible to change the nationalist sentiment of a people in these days. In the distant past Germany would surely have absorbed Alsace-Lorraine and the people would have become perfectly good German citizens. But nowadays acquisition by conquest is impossible in any permanent sense, and the Alsace-Lorrainers chafed under German rule and resumed their French nationality amid scenes of real rejoicing.

The drama then began. On the one side it was natural that there should be a desire to bring Alsace-Lorraine under purely French administration and to apply French laws – the laws which prevail in the rest of France. On the other side there was the reluctance of a people who had laws which in some respects were better than the French laws, or at least suited them better, to allow them to be changed. They were willing to be French,

but they were not willing to adopt the French laws suddenly, completely and finally. They pleaded that they had habits and traditions which could not be broken without considerable inconvenience and even suffering. The French, understanding that they should not disturb the existing conditions in Alsace-Lorraine more than was absolutely necessary, agreed that there should be a separate administration and appointed a Commissioner-General. Promises were made that there would always be shown the greatest respect for the practices of the people who had returned to the French fold.

But the system of a separate administration with separate laws was not one that could last. In the nature of things it was a temporary method adopted during a period of transition. Mistakes were made in endeavouring to hasten the process even by the more conservative governments which followed the armistice. In their excessive nationalist zeal, believing as they did that no laws could be better than French laws and that to bring the people of Alsace-Lorraine under them would not be a hardship but a benefit conferred, they were often led astray. On the whole they succeeded in preserving the good-will of the Alsace-Lorrainers, although certain economic changes which were made were resented.

*

But a specific cause for alarm in Alsace-Lorraine, as apart from the general anti-Catholic tendency of the Government, was to be found in M. Herriot's Ministerial declaration:

"The Government is persuaded that it will interpret faithfully the wishes of the dear populations at last restored to France by hastening the day on which will be effaced the last differences between the legislation in the recovered départements and the rest of the territory of the Republic. With that purpose it will abolish the office of Commissioner-General and will prepare measures which will permit, while respecting the acquired

situation and the material and moral interests of the population, the introduction in Alsace and Lorraine of the entire Republican legislation."

For many Radicals, it should be explained, the word Republican is synonymous with Secular, and particularly in regard to the schools do the Radicals contend that the Republican laws must favour Secular Education. The Catholics, who demand more laxity, are regarded as anti-Republican in their conceptions. At any rate, M. Herriot's declaration, although not very clear, caused a considerable outcry in Alsace-Lorraine, where it was understood that the régime – and particularly the scholastic régime – was menaced. Nor does it appear to be certain that the Government, to use its own expression, was faithfully interpreting the wishes of the "dear populations at last restored to France" by hastening the day when the last differences between the legislation of the recovered départements and the rest of the territory of the Republic should be effaced. There is considerable evidence that the effacement of these differences is the last thing that the Alsace-Lorraine populations desire.

As evidence of the state of mind created in Alsace-Lorraine the following resolution adopted by a large meeting of the population in the open air at Colmar may be quoted:

"The Catholics of Colmar, gathered together to protest against the religious war that the present Government has declared upon them, raise their voices against the project of unchaining religious strife in Alsace and Lorraine, without taking heed of the extremely difficult political situation of France both in the internal and in the foreign domain.

"They declare that the project ignores in the most brutal fashion the inalienable rights of the members of the Catholic religion and the imprescriptible rights of believing parents. They consider it to be the shameful breaking of a pledge given

by France to the Alsatians and Lorrainers to respect their liberties and their traditions.

"They energetically demand the maintenance of the laws which governed the Schools and the relations between the Church and the State at the moment of their return to France. They demand the withdrawal of the teaching personnel and the withdrawal of the scholastic books which do not respond to the spirit of the Confessional Schools. This personnel and these books have been surreptitiously introduced in the Schools by the educational authorities."

It is all very well to cry that the Republic is one and indivisible, but its unity cannot be realized suddenly, unless the authorities are indeed prepared to govern ruthlessly and to awaken the hostility of the people who practise the Catholic faith in the German language, and who are accustomed to have their children brought up in religious schools.

Under the German laws which apply to Alsace-Lorraine, the children are divided into three categories and attend three different kinds of schools. There are the Catholic schools, the Protestant schools and the Jewish schools. Every parent has to declare his religion, and his child has to be educated under a religious system of instruction. Now, since the choice is given, it may be thought that there is no special hardship, but the Radicals and the Socialists point out that the children of free-thinkers – children who have not been baptized – have no special schools which they can attend. Theoretically, all the inhabitants of Alsace and Lorraine must have a religion. That is the official conception, and under the German laws which prevail nobody is authorized to affirm himself to be without religious views. The French Radicals and Socialists, however, attach great importance to liberty of thought. They regard it as a tremendous grievance that Alsatians and Lorrainers who are free-thinkers, or who do not belong to one of the three cults for

which provision is made, should be obliged to choose a religion for their children, if those children are to be educated in the schools.

Religious instruction is in the curriculum and is given in the ordinary hours of school attendance. It is obligatory. Moreover it is given – and this is a point which greatly concerns the French advocates of liberty – by the teacher. This implies that the teacher in Alsace-Lorraine is himself obliged to choose between the three religions. He is placed under the surveillance of a minister of the cult, who often visits the school. These ministers – and this is specially reproached against the Catholics – not only supervise the religious instruction but intervene in the general education of the child. Sometimes they forbid the use of books which contain extracts from Michelet, Renan or Victor Hugo. One cannot be a teacher in Alsace-Lorraine if one is a free-thinker. The training schools are, say the French, Confessionals. The candidates for the teaching profession must attend the religious services, and must pass a special examination before a board on which a Bishop is represented. It is urged that it is not true to pretend that either the parents or the teachers have any freedom of conscience. They have merely a choice between three creeds, none of which may commend itself to the parents or to the teachers. The true compromise would seem to be the introduction of Inter-Confessional Schools in which religious instruction of various kinds may be given to those who desire it outside the ordinary school hours.

A FRANCO-GERMAN TRUST?

THE question of coal and iron would appear to be purely economic, but in fact it involves the greatest of all the diplomatic problems that present themselves to France. The alternative to the continuance of the Franco-German feud is, in the opinion of many Frenchmen, the formation of a Continental Bloc uniting France and Germany. That would be a political development of enormous importance.

But when one asks what could be the basis of such a Continental Bloc, one immediately sees that the Continental Bloc, if it is ever formed, must repose upon a Franco-German coal and iron and steel trust. What one can now write on this subject must necessarily be somewhat speculative, but nevertheless it is possible that the speculations will quickly be overtaken by events. Once more we find the discussions turning upon Alsace-Lorraine. We have already glanced at the religious and administrative difficulties which arise as a result of the return of these provinces to France. Now we shall see that the most gigantic economic and diplomatic consequences hinge upon the recovery of these regions. Whether Alsace-Lorraine will, in the end, join together France and Germany, or whether Alsace-Lorraine will form the true centre of the struggle between the two counties, cannot now be determined. But there is no more vital series of questions than those which turn upon the provinces which, formerly a part of the Holy Roman Empire, were ceded to France in 1648 at the Peace of Westphalia, and seized by Germany in 1871, and regained by France in 1919. During the years that they were under the German régime their natural resources were exploited; their economic equipment was brought up to date; an extraordinarily efficient railway system was established; electric power was produced; the potash deposits which were discovered in 1907 took their place among the greatest deposits of the world; the textile trades became

exceedingly prosperous; and above all, the Germans worked the coal and iron mines in a manner undreamed of not many years ago.

Particularly did Germany feel the loss of the iron ore of Lorraine: but Lorraine is also concerned about the possibility of finding an outlet into Germany, and this outlet is menaced by the political separation from Germany. The French cannot properly make use of the wealth of Alsace-Lorraine – and of the Sarre – unless there is a satisfactory working arrangement between the mining and manufacturing magnates of Westphalia and the French metallurgists, and unless there is, as between the Governments, a satisfactory Customs agreement by which the German market (that during the first five years after the peace, took, under the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, about 1,500,000 tons of the products of Lorraine and the Sarre) remains open to France. When the French and the German Governments came to consider what should be the relations between Alsace-Lorraine and Germany after the expiration of the Treaty arrangements on January 10, 1925, what kind of Customs barriers, if any, should be erected, the German experts immediately proposed that there should be a far-reaching understanding by which the metallurgical production of Europe should be regulated for the purpose of preventing over-production and ruinous competition. The French ironmasters could not but receive favourably these suggestions, but they pointed out that there would be unfortunate international complications unless the negotiations were extended.

In spite of various obstacles which prevented an accord being reached at the moment, one could clearly see the possibilities of an exchange of products between France and Germany – especially of French ore for German coal and coke – and a convention in respect of markets and prices. Transcending the sentimental disputes of Europe, transcending the reparations problem and even the problem of French security, and in some

degree conditioning them, is the economic situation which now exists, or will hereafter exist, between France and Germany. If the organization, which may be conveniently described as the French Comité des Forges, and the German industrialists, can bring about a combination, the most formidable force in the whole Continent will be constituted. Together they could rule Europe, and would be greater than the Governments. They could control the issues of war and peace. Economically they would be without rivals.

France has always depended upon foreign supplies of coal. In 1922, 45 per cent. of the consumption was imported. The two principal coal areas – the *départements du Nord* and *Pas de Calais* – were badly damaged, but the progress made in reconstruction has been remarkable. Gradually France is returning to her pre-War production. Without Alsace-Lorraine in 1913 over 40,000,000 tons were extracted, and the Lorraine fields produce at the annual rate of from five to six million tons. With the better equipment of the mines it is believed that in a few years the French capacity of production may rise to sixty million tons. But on the other hand, the consumption of France in 1913 was 64,000,000 tons, and there must be added over 11,000,000 tons for Alsace-Lorraine. Therefore the needs of France may be reckoned at 75,000,000 tons. England was the greatest importer, and Germany, under the Treaty, has also been a considerable importer. When we turn to coke suitable for the metallurgical industry, we find that France was obliged in pre-War days to import 50 per cent. of her consumption. With the recovery of the Lorraine ore fields, French requirements have probably risen from about seven to ten million tons. Assuming that the French coke-making mines work at their hardest, it is probable that France will still need 50 per cent. of her coke from abroad, and in bulk the deliveries from abroad must be very much greater than in 1913.

This means, to put the matter bluntly, that if the French

metallurgical trades are to be put on an economic footing, France is dependent on importations in one form or another of large quantities of coal and coke from Germany. Without German co-operation, one need not push the facts too hard to arrive at the paradox that Lorraine ore will be a burden rather than an asset to France. The occupation of the Ruhr and the reduction of the supplies of German coke produced the gravest perturbations in the metallurgical industry, and compelled the closing of many blast furnaces. The metallurgical industry in the eastern départements and in the northern départements, as well as in Alsace-Lorraine, suffered greatly. But these are temporary conditions, and it may properly be expected that if once there is a general understanding, the output could be doubled if it were held to be desirable.

*

The French metallurgical industry has, to a large extent, become unified. There have been combinations effected on the greatest scale, both in regard to the companies in France as geographically delimited in 1913, and the companies of Alsace-Lorraine. Moreover the interlocking of these national enterprises has been accompanied by a process of internationalization. French firms, such as Schneider's, have bought up collieries and blast furnaces in Austria, in Upper Silesia, in Poland, and have acquired the great Skoda Works in Czecho-Slovakia. In Roumania, in Yugo-Slavia, the French have firmly implanted themselves, nor is Hungary left out, and Russia is regarded as a field to be exploited. In some cases the Germans co-operated with the French in this expansion – this spreading out of tentacles all over Europe. Nothing more amazing has been seen in our generation than the revolution which has taken place in French industrial ideas. Until a few years ago the French mining and manufacturing trades were comparatively modest in their conceptions; they did not seek to combine even in their own country, much less to establish international combinations.

The change has come silently and it is realized suddenly. The big industries seek to possess the sources of their raw material, their factories, and even their markets. The mine-owner, the manufacturer of machinery and all other iron and steel goods, and even the industrialist who purchases the machinery is – if one may put the matter broadly – one and the same person. The huge companies own, or at least control, their own docks and ships, and generally the commercial and industrial equipment of which they make use. This is entirely new so far as France – which has never been regarded as a highly industrialized country – is concerned.

It is impossible to exaggerate developments of this character which have, during the past few years, been seen in France. In the metallurgical trades – though the movement is not confined to them – the preparations for an industrial and commercial trust which a few years ago would have been regarded as altogether alien to French methods have been pushed to their highest point. The Comité des Forges, which exists to protect the interests of the various concerns which form part of it, has been properly described as an organization which uses industry to advance national policy, and uses political power in the advancement of industry. Certainly it wields a greater power in the press, in politics, and in finance, than is usually realized. When one speaks of Imperialism, one thinks of it in its political sense, but there is a much more portentous form of Imperialism – Economic Imperialism.

Behind much that has taken place between France and Germany there looms the shadow of the mining magnates of both countries who observe the opportunity of an immense co-ordination. That there should be a long wrangle about the terms is not surprising. Advantage was taken of the occupation of the Ruhr to put pressure on the Germans and obtain a better bargain, but from this point of view – as indeed from every other – the Ruhr policy failed. The French would naturally

like the predominant voice in the control of any trust, while the Germans on their side, require the effective control of this unprecedented *konzern*. There are those who believe that eventually, whatever accords may be made, the Germans will absorb the French as the tiger absorbed the imprudent young lady who endeavoured to ride him. But this is by no means certain, for it cannot be too emphatically insisted upon that there is the most extraordinary change in French business mentality.

When France regained Alsace-Lorraine she acquired something which she had never lost. The provinces she had lost, but it was Germany who developed the resources of the provinces, and France took them over as a going concern of vastly greater value than the going concern of fifty years ago. But France was nevertheless under a handicap for the simple reason that everything conspires to make Lorraine the complement of the Ruhr. The Ruhr at a pinch can do without Lorraine, but Lorraine cannot do without the Ruhr. As long ago as 1920 – that is to say, immediately after the Treaty of Versailles – there were many meetings in Paris between the industrial representatives of the two countries. At a time when it would have been difficult for the ordinary German – or even the German politician – to come to the French capital, the German magnates were able to meet their French colleagues. These negotiations broke down. There was an intervention of interested international financiers, and the chief difficulty in the way of a Franco-German agreement has always been that there are the interests of other countries to consider. France and Germany cannot isolate themselves from the world; they cannot live together in a vacuum of their own making. Possibly if these earlier negotiations had succeeded, the struggle over reparations would never have become acute. If once the French and the German industrialists had come to a working arrangement, the whole complex European problem would have been changed. There are many who believe that, however bad the results may have been for

other countries, peace would have been assured on the Continent, and the cry for security would have been stilled. One cannot tell: it is useless to indulge in might-have-beens, but the temptation to indulge in might-be's is stronger. Were there a union of the iron lands and the coal lands of the two countries, the whole face of things would be altered.

Put shortly then, France wants coal and coke, and Germany wants iron-ore. If the same consortium had control of Lorraine and the Ruhr, of Briey and Longwy, besides the various mines and factories of Central European countries, it would without question be the steel and iron king of Europe. Whether such a consummation, desired in some quarters, will ever be reached, remains doubtful. It is not only the great addition in iron-ore resources which should give France a much greater position than she actually possesses, but also the volume and quality of equipment for transformation purposes, such as blast furnaces, basic converters, open hearth furnaces, rolling mills, foundries and various other forms of metal-working shops. The reconstruction of the Works of de Wendel, Homécourt, Longwy, and so forth, has been completed, and French firms possess the most modern power houses, coke ovens, batteries, steel works and other equipment. These statements will be found in the most interesting inquiry on this subject made by Mr. J. R. Cahill, the Commerical Counsellor of the British Embassy in Paris, who points out that whatever may be the financial position of the French State, there has been a tremendous economic recovery which, so far as one can see, should, if circumstances are propitious, be continued.

*

The Germans, though they have their obvious limitations, are a far-sighted people. They have been foolishly denounced since the Armistice as stupid. It is possible that their political sense has been sadly wanting on many occasions, but their business sense, their power of organization and their foresight can hardly

be disputed. They made provision against the day when they might lose Lorraine: they deliberately developed Lorraine in such a manner that its ore and its half-finished products had necessarily to go to Germany. Lorraine ore has great weight and bulk, it cannot be transported in a raw state to any distant part; it would not pay for shipping. Moreover, the Germans were not so foolish as to admit a forced union. Their passive resistance in the Ruhr defeated any projects that the Comité des Forges had. A bargain could not thus be driven, for the blast furnaces of the Ruhr can be fed, if needs be, by the lighter iron-ore which can be imported from other countries.

It is not the French who invented the idea of a Franco-German combination. The Germans before the War wanted a combination of their own kind: they coveted the iron mines of Briey. Had they won, they would doubtless have brought this basin under their control. Germany had too much coal, she had not enough iron. She was the leading coal power in Europe, with the great basins of the Moselle and the Sarre, Westphalia, Upper Silesia and Saxony. To-day the French metallurgists have great quantities of iron but insufficient coal, and they look to Westphalia, which produces over 90,000,000 tons of coal a year. It has been argued that the question does not greatly affect the United States and Great Britain. Does it really matter, from the British and the American viewpoint, whether Lorraine and the Ruhr, together with the Sarre Valley, come under the control of France or Germany, or under the united control of the two countries? Did not Lorraine, the Sarre and the Ruhr exist before the War? Were they not then completely under German control? Can their output be greater than it was in those days? Is not undivided possession more efficient than divided possession? To all these questions it must be answered that other districts than Lorraine, the Sarre and the Ruhr will work together if France and Germany agree. French and German competition will be extinguished. Furthermore, it should be

repeated that the French have developed an industrial science that was not theirs before the War, and this science will be stimulated by the co-operation of the German industrialists in France and in Germany and in Central Europe. No wonder, then, that British steel circles are uneasy at the prospect of France and Germany joining hands for the common exploitation of their mineral resources. England was showing signs of falling behind before the War, and although it is to be hoped that she will be equal to all emergencies, the task before her will be rendered more arduous by the formation of anything like a Continental Bloc in the political and economic sense. It is essential, therefore, that England should have some voice in the chapter, and doubtless the United States will also become aware of the necessity of economic solidarity with Europe.

In any case, whatever happens in the near future, the dominating economic fact about France is that poor in coal she is the richest country in Europe in iron-ore. In world production she may be classed immediately after the United States. From 5 million tons which were extracted in 1901, the output leapt to 16 million tons in 1911 and 22 million tons in 1913. With the deposits of Lorraine France should have almost doubled her output, since Lorraine in 1913 under German administration yielded over 21 million tons – 60 per cent. of the whole German production. France, therefore, has a potential output of 40 to 43 million tons, and it would be misleading merely to look at the present low figures.

*

There is another product of Alsace-Lorraine which obliges France to come to an accord with Germany if she is to make the most of her new resources. The recovery of Alsace assures to France the possession of large deposits of potash. France no longer requires the German potash, and by an agreement with Germany, is able to establish what amounts to a virtual monopoly. There was a danger that when the mines of Alsace were

taken from Germany the two countries would endeavour to cut each other's throats. By joining forces, the Alsatian owners and the German owners could face the world and make their own terms. Therefore the rival producers have thought proper in a preliminary convention of a temporary character – a convention which will certainly be made more comprehensive and permanent – to divide the American market between themselves. The French are to take 37½ per cent., and the Germans 62½ per cent. There will be no competition in potash; there will be a Franco-German trust. Well over a million tons of potash are produced, and nearly all of it is exported.

Again, in the textile industries it will be necessary for Alsace to arrive at a compromise with German manufacturers. With its membership of the German Customs Union, Alsace directed its textile products towards Germany, and it is impossible satisfactorily to change the current and to dispose of Alsatian products in France and the French Colonies. Certainly an attempt is being made to absorb the textiles of Alsace, but other districts of France appear to be able to provide for all French needs – and indeed to export large quantities of textiles. Furthermore it happens that Alsatian textiles must sometimes be sent into Germany for finishing processes. They must follow the same procedure as before the War – with this difference, that the textiles now have to go backwards and forwards across a frontier. It is hardly to be supposed that the French and German manufacturers will finally refuse to do what is advantageous to them both. Customs barriers are undoubtedly disadvantageous, in a special sense, for Alsace-Lorraine, and Germany, when the most-favoured nation treatment provisions of the Treaty were abolished in 1925, had a powerful weapon in the French need for a commercial treaty.

It is to be noted, too, that even in regard to dye-stuffs, though France possibly could manage without Germany, it would be simpler to enter into a business convention with the German

Dye-Stuff Trust. Particularly striking is a statement on this point by M. Paul Petit, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Professor of Chemistry at Nancy. He is an authority whose opinion must be listened to, but that opinion has perhaps more weight because it suited French business interests to make considerable use of it. France can obtain from Germany on account of reparations quantities of dye-stuffs, but it is believed to be better to ask for them not by way of reparations but by way of ordinary commercial transactions. M. Petit contends that obligatory deliveries of a moderate quantity of German dye-stuffs will not create a satisfactory situation. There would be perpetual difficulties which the recovered provinces are anxious to avoid. He demands, therefore, a freely consented convention such as, he says, exists between the British Dye-Stuffs Corporation and the German Trust. A convention of this kind was actually elaborated at the end of 1922, but it fell through because of the occupation of the Ruhr. It is urged that it should now be renewed in exchange for France's renunciation of obligatory deliveries. This example well demonstrates the tendency of French business to ignore reparations. Reparation deliveries have always been looked upon askance because they are doubtful and because they may injure French trade. Everything conspires, therefore, to increase the desire of business men for a Franco-German union. The difficulties are immense, but they may be overcome. France wants to come into line with other producing countries. As Mr. Cahill, to whom I have already referred, writes: "As in the other principal producing countries, the keynote of France's recent reconstitution has been a consolidation whether along horizontal or vertical lines, and the regional developments in this direction have tended to become national and even international in scope. This movement has been peculiarly conspicuous in the great metallurgical and engineering industries, but its operation has been visible in a whole series of other industries, and it has been

attended by enlargement and superior equipment of units."

It is this economic revolution in France, this new consciousness of the exigences of modern trade, this desire for arrangements which will permit developments on the largest possible scale, that may entirely transform the French outlook and lead to results in the political and diplomatic sphere that are at present regarded with some scepticism. It is thus that the Continental Bloc comes into the realm of possibilities.

Chapter 8

THE ECONOMIC REVOLUTION

THE economic recovery of France after the War was truly remarkable. There will be ups-and-downs and it will probably be found hereafter that in 1924 France reached the apex of her prosperity, when for the first time since the early years of the century she had a substantial trade balance in her favour. This result was not produced by the operation of a steadily falling currency. Although the franc was low it was not slipping swiftly and perpetually as the German mark had slipped, and cannot be said to be a factor in fictitious commercial wealth. The importations were more than 40 milliard francs' worth of goods; while exportations amounted to nearly 41½ milliard francs' worth. France, too, has very large invisible exports on account of her attractiveness for the tourist and her numerous luxury trades. Sixty-five per cent. of France's purchases abroad are raw materials and machinery necessary to French industry. Only about 13 per cent. of the imports were manufactured articles, and the remaining percentage represents foodstuffs which, at a pinch, France could do without. Exported manufactured articles accounted for 60 per cent. of France's sales to foreign countries. In these post-war years, therefore, it is impossible to look at the economic tables without realizing that France, in spite of her difficulties, is flourishing. The increase of prices as expressed in francs by no means accounts for the expansion of French commerce in world markets, and is not of course responsible for the transference of the balance from the debit to the credit side. If one analyses the figures for each month of 1924 one discovers that towards the end of the year the balance began to turn against France. This is in part due to the manner in which the statistics are compiled. It is possible, of course, that France will not maintain herself in the excellent position she has reached, but on the whole the prospects are good providing that there is no great currency upheaval which will bring

about confusion. Expressed in tons the same progress is registered. Compared with 1913 the total French importations in 1924 are higher by nearly 32 milliard francs, or 12 million tons – that is to say, an increase in value of 377 per cent. and an increase in quantity of 27½ per cent. Taking exportations, the augmentation is 34½ milliard francs and 7¼ million tons – an increase of over 500 per cent. in value and 33 per cent. in quantity. There can thus be no doubt about the genuineness of the extraordinary development of French trade. One is impressed above all by the 58 per cent. increase in weight of manufactured articles exported from France in 1924 as compared with 1913.

France, in my opinion, in spite of the poverty of the State, is not only potentially but actually one of the richest countries in Europe, and it may well be that in a few years she will be the very richest of them all. While there was in other countries a trade depression which has had the gravest consequences, France entirely escaped sufferings of this kind. America had its bad period, England was hard hit, Italy passed through deep waters, the industrial population of Germany experienced trying times, Russia was afflicted with famine, but France went on working and selling and improving her industrial equipment. More and more machinery was introduced. At first it was bought abroad, and is still being bought abroad to some extent, but it is also being made in France. In short, France, which was regarded by most people as an agricultural country, now deserves the name of a highly industrialized country. A great impetus has been given to all branches of activity. If in the devastated areas there are still houses to be built, the industrial reconstruction is practically completed. Factories which were blown to pieces have been rebuilt on a larger scale than before. This is true in the woollen and the cotton trades, and it is also true in the chemical and engineering trades.

There have been protests both in France and abroad at what

was described as the excessive expenditure on reconstruction. It was urged that the War victims had inflated their claims, that the French Government had paid without strict investigation, and that in consequence the demands on Germany had been swollen beyond reason. In defence it may be urged that it would have been surprising had it been otherwise when the whole spirit which prevailed was that Germany would pay. These hopes have been falsified and the French Exchequer has been too heavily burdened. A sum which is variously estimated, but which may fairly be put at 80 milliard francs, has been expended on the reconstitution of the ruined regions. The morality of the proceedings in the case of individuals may be doubtful, but from the national point of view a good bargain may have been made. At the price of temporary financial difficulties, France has replaced old and inefficient works by new and improved works. Eventually, though this and that firm may have profited unduly, it will be France as a nation which will profit. Since there had to be restoration, it would have been foolish to have restored the bad as well as the good; it would have cost as much to put up buildings similar to those destroyed as it cost to put up better buildings. It would have been absurd to look for antiquated machinery when up-to-date machinery was available. Moreover, not only has the industrial north been improved, but many factories which were erected in other parts of France as an emergency measure during the War, continue to produce.

We have already seen how the farmer has been induced to adopt co-operative methods and is employing more machinery. At the same time the State has been quietly at work, and while the politicians have been chiefly clamouring about German recalcitrancy and the possibility of a German *revanche*, the authorities have been organizing the resources at the disposal of France. Ports and waterways, railways and roads, have been made; and schemes of all kinds have been under consideration.

Many of these schemes will doubtless remain in the cartons of the various departments; but nevertheless in many instances their execution has begun. There has been a systematic utilization of water power – and in this respect the future of France is most hopeful, since if France is short of coal, she has plenty of rivers and waterfalls from which she can obtain all the electric power she needs.

Much has been written about the political situation in France and about French diplomacy, but very little attention has been paid to economic developments which, in the end, will prove to be the permanent factors. They are much more important than the immediate difficulties which Finance Ministers experience in balancing the Budget.

*

Observers who pass through France sometimes bring back reports of scandalous laxity and slowness of reconstruction in the ten départements which constitute the liberated regions. One wonders how they come to receive such an impression. It is probably because a good proportion of the people are still living in temporary dwellings; but a moment's consideration will make it clear that priority had to be given to other things than permanent housing. To bring back the population to the finest houses would have been absurd if the roads were still impracticable, if there was no work to be had, if ordinary necessities such as water supplies and lighting were not available. On the whole the French began in the right way. They provided the elements of communal life, and it is somewhat demagogic to complain that the housing schemes are not as far advanced as the schemes for the rebuilding of bridges and the setting up of factories. Blunders were undoubtedly made. Scandals were bound to arise. The immense character of the undertaking must be remembered. It was necessary to start from the beginning. The task was vast and complicated. It is absurd to speak of the occasional blunders as a new "Panama." Nothing, it seems to

me, has revealed the resiliency and the resourcefulness of the French so much as the manner in which they tackled the towering problem, and whatever "revelations" are made, I can have nothing but admiration for the successive French Governments which have encouraged and organized the restoration of the north and, without financial means, have succeeded in a few short years in reinstalling a large majority of the total pre-war population.

Over 2,000,000 people have returned to their towns and villages, and the population of the north is only a few thousands less than it was in 1914. The number of houses destroyed was 300,000, while 150,000 were seriously damaged and 350,000 partially damaged. Not only the authorities, but the mining companies and other employers of labour have promoted great housing schemes. The Lens Mining Company alone has built nearly 70,000 houses, and other companies which could be mentioned have built 5,000 here and 3,000 there. Not only have the necessary funds been raised by loans through the Crédit National, but the municipalities and other public authorities have in many cases issued loans, while groups of manufacturers – engaged in the metallurgical, the beet-sugar and the textile trades, among others – have raised capital for reconstruction purposes, the loans being based upon their assets and upon their claims on the French Government. Co-operative organizations have rebuilt churches which had been razed to the ground during the War. Three-and-a-quarter million hectares of land were devastated: well over 3 million hectares have been cleared. Two million hectares of agricultural land were devastated: well over 1½ million hectares are under cultivation again. 3,500 communes were occupied by the enemy and, in many cases, completely annihilated: municipal organizations have been re-established in over 3,250 of these communes. Before the War there were 7,298 elementary schools: there are now 7,008. There are actually more post-offices open than in 1914. All the

main railway lines have long since been restored, and there remains little to be done in the reconstruction of local lines. Practically all the waterways are navigable, and the roads are available for traffic. Live-stock has been replenished. Out of 22,000 industrial establishments, over 20,000 have been rebuilt. Generally, the industrial efficiency of the north, which was the chief centre of trade, has been greatly increased. The salving of the coal mines was almost a miracle.

The State may have been imprudent from the strictly business point of view in accepting full responsibility for the restoration of the north, and in pledging its own credit for compensation of the *sinistrés* before it ascertained the financial possibilities, but it cannot be denied that morally the State owed this reparation to the inhabitants, and the State should eventually reap its reward.

When the north was overrun by Germany, industries were transplanted: Paris saw an astonishing increase of factories; Lyons became still more highly industrialized; Marseilles, Bordeaux, St. Nazaire, Rouen and many other centres, provided new factories and workshops; and these factories and workshops have not been scrapped. In the Pyrenees, in the French Alps, in the Central Plateau, there was a veritable metamorphosis; it was a metamorphosis that will have a considerable influence on the future of France. Considerable in itself, it seemed to set in motion fresh forces – a hitherto unknown resolve to create goods on a vast scale, to make the most of French riches, to become as far as possible self-sufficing, and even to compete with the nations that were regarded as the industrial leaders of Europe. This spirit of emulation once awakened, has grown tremendously in France. It would take many pages merely to enumerate the plans that have been prepared, most of them under the auspices of M. Le Trocquer, who remained Minister of Public Works under successive Governments for four years.

*

The Government has taken upon itself the responsibility for the improvement of the national roads – necessary because of the development of motor traffic, the number of motor vehicles which was in 1913, 99,000, having risen to 500,000. Canals now form a network 3,280 miles in length and are being extended. There is a great Marseilles-Rhône Canal nearing completion; the Canal du Nord is being enlarged and will bring Douai, Péronne and Compiègne into direct communication and link up the Belgian waterways with the Seine. The Rhône-Rhine Canal is now navigable by ships of 350 tons. There is under way a Strasbourg-Basle Canal. The Moselle, the Meuse and the Sarre are to be united. These are only a few of the waterway schemes. Then there are plans for the enlargement of ports – Paris, Rouen, Marseilles, Bordeaux (where a practically new outer port has been created), Havre, Nantes, St. Nazaire, Boulogne, Brest (which it is hoped to make a port of call for Transatlantic liners), and Strasbourg, which is becoming an exceedingly important inland port. The railways show a steady increase of traffic, and the standard of safety, which had fallen very low, is now much higher than in the pre-War years.

The chief French railways are the État, Alsace-Lorraine, Nord, Est, Paris-Lyons-Méditerranée, Paris-Orléans and Midi. While the autonomy of the different railways is maintained, a Superior Railways Council has been instituted and the various railway systems are working together. A deficit is still shown in the year's working of all the principal lines. One most interesting development is the introduction of electric traction. In particular, three large companies – the Midi, the Paris-Orléans and the Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée – are putting into execution a plan which affects 5,625 miles of railway. In the Basque country and in the neighbourhood of the Pyrenees there are abundant evidences of the work now proceeding to instal electric traction by employing the "white coal" furnished by the waterfalls of the Pyrenees. It will take fifteen years to realize the whole

project, and beyond the present project there is another much vaster plan which has been prepared in association with the Ministry of Public Works. As long ago as 1893 the P.L.M. began to electrify its lines, but progress until recently was extremely slow. Now electrification of the lines from Lyons to Geneva, from Lyons to Grenoble, and from Lyons to Marseilles is assured. The Paris-Orléans Company is electrifying a third of its system, obtaining power chiefly from the Auvergne Mountains, though partly it will be generated near Paris. An electric line from Paris to Orléans is expected shortly.

Perhaps in nothing is the economic progress of France so clearly demonstrated as in the schemes for the greater utilization of water-power. It is believed that the available resources of France in water-power amount to 9,000,000 h.p. Within a comparatively short time it is hoped that no less than one-third of the amount will be employed and if the necessary capital can be obtained there will be a much fuller exploitation of the rivers and waterfalls of France. Enthusiasts see in these schemes the possibility of making up for the shortage of coal. The electric power, which can soon be obtained, will be equivalent to 24,000,000 tons of coal a year. Trains could be run, electric power conveyed to the remotest villages not only for electric lighting purposes but for the working of agricultural machinery. This means that labour, too, can be saved. The programme is to be carried out through the co-operation of the public authorities and of private capitalists. The public authorities have promised their assistance to four great schemes – those of the Rhône, Dordogne, the Truyère and the Rhine. In the case of the Rhône scheme the various départements which will be affected are participating in the capital of 360,000,000 francs, while Paris and Lyons are also to give their help. Sixteen stations are to be constructed with a total of nearly a million-and-a-half h.p. Moreover France is experimenting in the possibility of obtaining power from the tides. In this she has been a

pioneer. There is in course of construction at Aberwrack an experimental tidal power station which, it is hoped, will provide a constant minimum of 1,600 h.p. At the same time, since the power stations are usually remote from the centres of consumption, a careful estimate of distribution is being gradually worked out which will enable practically every commune in France to obtain electrical energy.

*

Before the War the French Mercantile Marine took fifth place among the fleets of the world. To-day, with its 4,000,000 tons, it takes third place, coming after Great Britain and the United States. It is closely followed by Japan. In 1914 France owned a fleet of 2,500,000 tons of which 1,115,000 tons were lost during the War. It is extraordinary that France has managed to make up these losses so quickly. It is, indeed, possible that she has somewhat overdone shipbuilding, and that the best is not being got out of her mercantile fleet. The mercantile fleet of France numbers about 1700 steamers and motor-vessels, and 365 sailing vessels. The shipowners are dropping competition with each other and are learning the value of working arrangements.

In civil aviation great enterprise has been shown, and there are services to every part of Europe which have their centre in Paris. There are Air Lines from Toulouse to Morocco, and special attention is being given to connecting up Northern Africa with Eastern and Equatorial Africa by aeroplane. The State contributes handsomely towards the expenses of these developments. In the 1924 Budget, out of a total of 835,649,111 francs allotted to the Air Department, 154,565,715 francs were devoted to civil aviation and 5,800,000 francs to Colonial aviation. The subsidies to the Air Navigation Companies are generous. At present there does not appear to be much demand for purely internal services, and the aeroplane is chiefly in demand as connecting country with country. There are services from Paris to Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and to Prague and Warsaw.

There is a constant service from Paris to London and to Brussels. Marseilles may, in future, become a great aviation centre – the starting point of services to Spain and Africa and perhaps to Italy and Tunisia. Bordeaux might also furnish the jumping-off place for a Dakar service passing by Lisbon, Casablanca and Las Palmas. It is particularly, however, in services to Morocco and Algeria and thence across the great expanses of French African territory, that it is sought to develop aviation.

France, in competing with other countries, has a considerable advantage. The wages are considerably lower than in England and in the United States. It is difficult to arrive at satisfactory figures because of the fluctuations of the exchange, but I am inclined to accept the calculations of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, which, after consulting American industrial companies which maintain factories in Europe, has issued a report on daily wages in terms of American dollars. The records compiled at the end of 1924 show that workers in the United States receive on an average $5·60. In England the figure is $2·28, in Germany $1·55. At Paris wages stand at $1·35, and in the provinces of France at $1·24. In Belgium wages are $1·14, and in Italy below the dollar.

France holds to her policy of Protection, and has on several occasions raised the coefficient of the duties which are imposed. In some cases there is a 700 per cent. increase on the minimum rates, but this, of course, is exceptional. France has obtained commercial treaties with Canada, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Poland, Greece, Italy, Finland and other countries. There is a *modus vivendi* with Germany. With Belgium there were difficulties, for the Belgian Parliament failed to ratify the agreement which had been negotiated, but such difficulties are temporary as are the differences with Portugal and with Spain.

There remains the need for commercial negotiations with a number of extremely important trading countries, and French business men are constantly criticizing the Government for its

failure to arrive at accords. Fairs and exhibitions of all kinds have been promoted much more frequently and in many more centres than before the War. They are chiefly designed to foster trade. In addition to such fairs and exhibitions at Paris, there are important exhibitions at Lyons, at Bordeaux, at Tours, at Rennes, at Strasbourg. These exhibitions have no longer the character of popular amusements on an exceptional scale; they are serious displays of industrial products. The new form of fair is from every point of view better than the old.

No attempt has been made in this chapter to deal in detail with the engineering and the chemical trades, which have expanded in the most remarkable manner. Nor is it possible to show at length how the woollen, cotton, linen and jute industries are all working at their highest capacity and are invading countries such as England, which used to be large importers into France. The silk trade, which centres on Lyons, the lace trade of the north, the fancy goods trade of Paris, the motor-car industry, which is going ahead by leaps and bounds, are all flourishing. France, in the economic sense, has not only recovered but has done much more than was necessary to get back to the starting point of 1914. She has done this in spite of the gravest pre-occupations, political and financial. The country is sound at heart and is much more consciously organized than before.

*

The outlook is bright if the financial difficulties can be conjured. France has sloughed her old conservative methods; she has come into closer contact with the world and has been fired by the spirit of progress. A few years ago French business men were content to vegetate; they rarely thought of developing their enterprises. As far as possible they kept their business in the family and preferred to carry on in the old safe manner. They had little conception of industry and commerce on the modern scale. They declined to accept more responsibility than they could easily carry. But all this seems to be changed. Citroën,

who has adopted the methods of manufacture of Henry Ford, may be taken to be in some respects the most representative of the new generation of Frenchmen. But the Schneiders and the de Wendels, who have modelled themselves upon the Stinnes and the Krupps, are thoroughly representative, though they remain in the background.

This at least the War has done for France, though whether it be altogether good or bad is debatable: it has given Frenchmen greater daring and enterprise; it has made Frenchmen look beyond their own frontiers; life has become more intense, and France has determined to keep up in the race. The old insularity, which was much more characteristic of France than of England, is disappearing, and cosmopolitanism is not only the outstanding feature of the new French art and literature, but of French economic life. France has suddenly begun to borrow ideas from the business men of other countries: she is imitating them, striving to enter into accord with them, and reaching out beyond her borders to attain economic control and enjoy economic influence in many lands. It may well be that France, which tended to become narrowly nationalistic and to shut herself up in a watertight compartment, will in spite of certain superficial, and chiefly political, signs, be led by the War to take a much fuller part in the common economic activities of the world.

Chapter 9

COLONIAL ENTERPRISES

THERE are three French axioms to-day of immense importance. The first is: France is a nation of 100,000,000 inhabitants. The second is: France expects from the development and exploitation of her Colonies her economic and financial re-establishment. The third is: it will be necessary to sink another 4 milliard francs in the Colonies before they begin to return proper profits to France.

The whole of French Colonial policy since the War is summed up in these phrases, which everybody is repeating. Particularly has it become fashionable to add the population of the Colonies, Protectorates and Mandated Countries to the population of the Mother Country and thus refute the pessimistic lament that France is a decadent nation. Are there not in Algeria nearly 6 million persons, in Tunisia more than 2 million, in Morocco 5½ million and in the Sahara nearly half a million, making a total for North Africa of 13½ million; and in French West Africa are there not over 12 million inhabitants, in Togoland nearly 700,000, in French Equatorial Africa not far short of 3 million, in the Cameroons 22½ million, in Madagascar another 3 million, and in various other African lands small populations which, added to those already given, bring up the grand total for Africa to 35½ million? Then if one looks to Asia one finds in Syria and the Liban over 2 million inhabitants, a few hundred thousand in the Indian territories, and in Indo-China no fewer than 19 million persons under French rule. Nor can one forget the half million inhabitants of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guyana and other possessions which come into the American orbit. New Caledonia and the French establishments in Oceania only add another 80,000. But in all it will be seen that the French Empire comprises over 47 million inhabitants, besides the 39 million inhabitants of France. Never before have the French been so conscious of their

potential strength. An enormous impetus has been given to colonization.

Every reader of the newspapers will remember the "missions" in caterpillar cars and in aeroplanes that have, during recent years, followed each other in rapid succession across Africa. The French African Empire is indeed fairly compact, though the vast spaces of the Sahara lie between Morocco and Algeria in the North and Western and Equatorial Africa. The French have undertaken the task of conquering the desert. They have shown that it can be traversed without undue difficulty. Timbuktu is no longer the symbol of remoteness and inaccessibility. The Niger is no longer unknown. Lake Tchad is as familiar to the French as, say, the lakes of Switzerland.

Sometimes the missions have pushed on from the Soudan to French Somaliland and the port of Djibouti. Motor-car manufacturers even announce that they propose to run excursions twice a week to the West African Colonies. Airmen take a single leap from Paris to the Senegalese port of Dakar, which in twenty-five years has seen its population grow from 3,000 to 30,000. There is plenty of bold advertising of the French possessions, and some of these audacious experiments will doubtless produce good results. There are schemes for the building of railways and of roads, and although one is sceptical about any rapid progress being made, still it cannot be denied that the French are showing a colonizing enterprise of which they had hardly been suspected. More books have been written about the French lands overseas since 1920 than in all the years which preceded 1920. Great Colonial Exhibitions have been promoted, and Frenchmen have marvelled at the miracle of the greater France.

Morocco, in particular, under the guidance of Marshal Lyautey, has fired the imagination of the stay-at-home French, and the contrast between (in spite of Riff troubles) flourishing French Morocco and the unhappy Spanish zone, the scene of perpetual fighting and brigandage, gratifies French pride.

Only a few years ago it was easy to poke fun at French attempts at colonization, and although the curse of officialdom is still undestroyed, there can be no question that the French have now the true pioneer outlook and are, within the limits of their resources, making great progress. They have not only great hopes of commercial benefits, of riches hitherto undreamed of, but they look upon Africa as a reservoir of troops that may be used not only in the Colonies themselves but in Europe. France has long learned to make use of the foreigner to help her in her fighting, and the Foreign Legion and native contingents played a brilliant part in Algeria and in other parts of the African Empire. But it is the Senegalese from West Africa who have been used most in Colonial fighting for half a century. They have been employed in Morocco and even in Madagascar. The idea of recruiting black troops for permanent service abroad must be attributed to General Mangin. In the Great War they were drawn into the battle of the white races, and after the War they were unfortunately used to patrol German territory.

Now the French in their reconstruction of the Army are depending upon the enlargement of the coloured contingents. One doubts the wisdom of this course, but it is certain that the French in their relations with the African races have been very successful. They have been less happy with the Yellow races. Tonkin, Annam and Cochin China and the Protectorate of Cambodia and Siam (in which France had a sphere of influence) cannot be said to have taken kindly to French methods, and moreover there have been unfortunate episodes in the Far East which have not improved French prestige. Many difficulties due to the resentment of the natives of Indo-China at taxation, at French officialism, are being overcome. Recently it has been decided to suppress the penal settlements in Oceania, and thus remove a scandalous blot from the French Colonial system.

It would seem that the French will solidly establish themselves in Syria, though at first their position was extremely

doubtful. Generally it may be said that considerable strides have been taken in the Colonial domain since 1920, and if the plan of action, vast and methodic, which has been drawn up by M. Albert Sarraut, for some years Minister of the Colonies, is carried out, France will be immensely strengthened economically. The Report of M. Sarraut on the necessity of organization of Colonial production is one of the most remarkable documents that have been prepared and not only gives a comprehensive view of the problems which France faces in this sphere, but indicates the new heart with which she approaches them.

*

The prevalent notion, when the Colonial movement really originated about 1880, was that the Colonies were chiefly outlets for French productions. Now it is realized that the Colonies may be made to produce for France all kinds of materials, such as cotton, wool, timber, cereals, oil, coffee, sugar, rice, leather, furs, and so forth. It is estimated that 60 per cent. of the materials which France buys from other countries could be furnished by the Colonies. In point of fact the Colonies before the War sent almost 60 per cent. of their production to countries other than France.

Into the details of the multitudinous schemes which have been brought before the authorities it is unnecessary to enter, for it may be properly supposed that only a certain percentage of them will be carried out. The chief point is that, thanks to a number of *animateurs* and the insistence of the Press, there have been revealed to France resources which were almost ignored. But it would be wrong to treat the French Colonial question as a purely economic question. The principles which are chiefly discussed are political. There are, for example, advocates of two formulas which are supposed to be in opposition: there are the advocates of a "policy of assimilation" and the advocates of a "policy of autonomy." Those who would have the Colonies "assimilated" by the Mother Country would accord to the inhabitants of the

French Colonies the right of being represented in Parliament and of participating in the political life of the nation. The local budgets would be absorbed in a large general budget, and France and her Colonies would be confounded in the same Customs union.

The partisans of autonomy, on the other hand, believe that France should imitate England and should aim at the constitution of Dominions bound to the Mother Country by ties of affection, though living their own lives. There should, however, be deliberations with France on essential points such as foreign policy and matters involving war or peace.

Senator Henri Lémery has, however, well pointed out that the French Colonial Empire is extremely diversified, and no single formula can be applied. There is an administrative diversity, an economic diversity, an ethnic diversity, a religious diversity. Even if one looks only at North Africa one will see that while Algeria is administered by the Minister of the Interior because it constitutes not a Colony strictly speaking but three French départements submitted to a special régime, Morocco and Tunisia come under the Minister of Foreign Affairs because they are Protectorates which keep their nominal sovereignty. The Colonies proper are directed by the Minister of Colonies. There is a lack of unity that often results in confusion.

In the Far East Indo-China possesses a Governor-General, New Caledonia possesses a General Council, while the New Hebrides are placed under the régime of a Franco-British Condominium. Other French territories have Administrative Councils, and others maintain their native kings. It would be difficult to disturb some of these special régimes. Economically, there is little resemblance even between Western Africa and Equatorial Africa. Some of the provinces of Western Africa are fertile and well peopled, while Equatorial Africa has a small population and the munificence of Nature is such that regulated agriculture is almost impossible. Indo-China has both agricul-

tural and mining riches. As for the stages of civilization of the inhabitants of the various territories, they range from the lowest to the highest. It must be agreed, therefore, that there cannot be any uniformity.

*

What are the French aims? That is an important question. We have seen that the riches of some of the countries which have been confided to France are found tempting, but it would be a mistake to believe that the present colonizing impulse is not determined by other considerations. Pure Radicalism and Socialism in France was, on the whole, opposed to expansion. It was, however, impossible to stop the current, but it was possible to turn it. Whatever may have been the original motives – and some of them are certainly not altogether creditable – to-day even the rudest soldier, the most selfish colonizer, has come to accept the idea that France, while doubtless assuring her own economic well-being, must accomplish a work of civilization. The inhabitants of the regions incorporated in the national domain must benefit – otherwise colonization is self-condemned.

M. Lémery quotes a report of General Archinard on the operations in the Valley of the Niger – a report which, he declares, he has taken at random. The soldier thus writes of the purpose which he was pursuing. "The purpose pursued in Soudan was that which had been indicated and pursued by the Government and by the successive Commanders: to instal ourselves in the countries to the west of the Niger which are in relation with our Colony of Senegal; to maintain peace and security; to employ as much as possible pacific means and to resort to force only when it is clearly demonstrated that the obstacles to the extension of our influence and our civilization and of our commerce cannot otherwise be suppressed."

It will be seen that, side by side with more material objectives, are generous objectives. These generous objectives have become

more and more conspicuous in the twentieth century. Marshal Lyautey, in Morocco, has especially striven for the welfare of the natives, while assuring the expansion of France.

Under the League of Nations Mandates, the rights of the natives are specifically safeguarded, and the countries which accept these Mandates must realize their duties to the backward races.

Nobody who has lived for any length of time in France or in the French Colonies can doubt that the French have seriously at heart the spread of civilization. There is no necessary opposition between the practical preoccupation and the humanitarian mission.

French activity in the Colonies should, according to M. Albert Sarraut, first be directed to the improvement of the system of transports; second, to the development of exports; and third, to the increase of production. In fact, French efforts have been chiefly turned to the betterment of transport facilities. Such economic equipment as the establishment of railway lines, of roads, of ports, may also be a powerful agent of civilization. But it is suggested that perhaps too much attention has been given to transport, and that the moment has now arrived when attention should be concentrated upon production. But it is not so easy to resolve the problems which arise. There is, for example, the matter of man-power. France cannot encourage emigration.

She is under-populated, not over-populated. Directors must indeed be supplied by France, but the workers must be found in the Colonies themselves. Now it is essential that these workers, if they are to become efficient, should be placed in more hygienic conditions than for the most part they exist in to-day. They must also be given at least the rudiments of instruction. To-day in West Africa there are only 300 schools frequented by 15,000 natives. When one remembers that the population is over 12 million, one sees that the progress is altogether unsatisfactory, and the figures which I have before me show that there is a

lamentable shortage of schools in all the French possessions – a shortage which is more clearly seen if one looks at the figures of educational establishments in British possessions which can be properly compared with those of the French.

Unless great advances are made in education, unless natives are gradually taught how to govern themselves, French colonization will be a failure both from the economic and the humanitarian point of view. But so real is the awakening of France to the possibilities, so enlightened is much of the discussion which takes place in Parliament, in the Press, and in various Institutions, so definitely is the double purpose of colonization kept in view, that France is not likely, in the new conditions created since the War, to fail.

FRANCE'S FORTUNE AND STATE FINANCES

THE total fortune of France is extremely difficult to ascertain. M. Clémentel in his Inventory indicates that the private wealth of the country is about 1,800 milliard francs, but the Rapporteur Général of the 1925 Budget, M. Viollette, does not hesitate to declare that there is a tremendous exaggeration in these figures. He shows that 1,800 milliards of capital represents, at 7 per cent, a revenue of 125 milliards. France has, he says, no such revenue. It is wrong to include salaries in such estimates, for salaries do not represent transmissible fortunes. He is inclined to fix the revenue from French capital holdings at 65 milliards, and to assume that any valuation at the beginning of 1925 of the permanent and transmissible riches of France would put them (on a $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. basis) at a thousand milliard francs. Personally I am disposed to accept the conclusions of M. Viollette, for M. Clémentel, in his Inventory, habitually capitalizes items which cannot properly be capitalized. The Viollette calculations correspond fairly well with the estimates of M. Edmond Théry for the year 1912. In 1912, according to M. Théry, the fortune of France amounted to 302,517 millions. The franc in March 1925 had fallen to between a third and a fourth of its former value; it would therefore seem that there is no great difference in reality between the 1,000 milliards of M. Viollette in 1925 and the 302 milliards of M. Théry in 1912.

But this valuation is considerably higher than that of M. Gide, who gave for 1914 the smaller sum of 280 milliards, and for 1921 440 milliards of paper francs. Alsace-Lorraine is of course comprised in the post-War figures. M. Gide further stated that the 440 milliard paper francs had a purchasing power of only 126 milliards as compared with the pre-War days. Therefore, while the nominal riches of France had increased by 50 per cent., the real riches of France had diminished by 50 per cent.

There can be no finality in such matters, but if M. Théry's

figures for 1912 are taken in detail and multiplied by 3½, it would seem that a workable hypothesis may be established. He put agricultural and other land at about 80 milliards, and buildings at about 60 milliards. Industrial and commercial values he reckoned at over 10 milliards, French convertible securities at 70 milliards, and foreign convertible securities at 40 milliards ; jewellery, objects of art and so forth were put at 21 milliards, and gold and silver currency at 9 milliards. Agricultural material and cattle he fixed at over 9 milliards, and there were various other valuations which went to make up the total. These figures are of some importance although they cannot be precisely ascertained because in considering whether the French tax-payer is heavily imposed or whether he is let off lightly, and whether the limits of taxation are or are not being approached, the wealth of the country should at any rate be roughly known. The most misleading assertions are made even in the technical Press of France, and imagination is given full rein. I find, for example, in the "Information," a serious financial organ, the assertion that France is paying in taxes one-third of the total annual revenue – which would make her fiscal effort about the same as that of England. The United States is said to pay only one-twentieth of its annual revenue in taxation. But this is based on the assumption that while the capital wealth of Great Britain is 18 milliard pounds sterling, and of the United States 300 milliard dollars, the capital wealth of France is only 350 milliard francs; while the national earnings are 2½ milliard pounds sterling for Great Britain, 71 milliard dollars for the United States and 100 milliard francs for France. (Obviously there is a ridiculous discrepancy between these figures of France's capital and revenue.) On such an assumption the French Public Debt exceeds the capital wealth of the country, while the British National Debt is considerably less than one-half the British capital wealth, and the American Debt is only one-fifteenth of the capital wealth of the United States. One is frankly sceptical of

such statements. The data cannot be relied upon. For the sake of completeness I insert here a table compiled by the National City Bank of New York designed to show the relative changes in the wealth of various countries since 1870:

In Million dollars.

	1922	1912	1890	1870
United States .	320,803	186,299	65,037	30,069
United Kingdom.	88,840	79,297	53,352	40,000
France . .	67,710	57,075	43,799	33,092
Germany . .	35,700	77,783	49,500	38,000
Italy . . .	25,986	23,030	9,733	7,300
Spain. . .	29,319	No data	11,193	10,512
Switzerland .	4,567	3,030	2,404	No data
Russia . .	No data	56,140	28,225	13,626
Poland . .	17,000	No data	No data	No data
Netherlands .	8,260	4,827	4,769	No data
Canada . .	22,095	10,980	4,744	2,871

If one works out the French wealth in francs on the basis of this table at the rate of 20 francs to the dollar one arrives at a total of 1,354 milliards.

*

Another line of argument is taken to show that France is not lacking in fiscal courage. I will give quite simply the reasoning of M. Bertrand Nogaro, Professor of Political Economy at the University of Paris and a Member of the Commission of Finances in the Chamber. France and England (to limit the comparison with England for the sake of convenience) have differemt monetary values. Taxation in England may be taken in round figures to be 800 million pounds sterling. How is this amount to be translated into francs? Obviously it would be ridiculously wrong to take the franc at its old value of 25 to the £. But, on the other hand, would one be right in multiplying English

pounds by 80 – or even by 90 – in accordance with the current rate of exchange? Professor Nogaro declares that a serious error would be committed in reckoning the franc at 80 to the £. Eighty francs mean much more to the French than £1 means to the British. The only reliable method of comparison is to take the purchasing power of the money of the two countries.

Now, in December 1924 the index figures of retail prices in France were 404 as against 178 in England. A little elementary arithmetic will therefore show that to compare the sacrifices made by the average British tax-payer and those made by the average French tax-payer the pounds must be converted into francs by being multiplied by 57 – since the parity of purchasing power is thus established. I leave to the distinguished professor the responsibility for this method of conversion, which would place at about 45 milliard francs the charges of the British Budget.

Now the French Budget for 1925 hovered in the neighbourhood of 35 milliard francs, and it is hoped that it will never exceed 40 milliards. Since the capital wealth of England and the private revenue of England are larger on almost any estimate except that of the too optimistic M. Clémentel, than those of France, M. Nogaro contends that the French fiscal effort is, if regard is paid to the contributive faculties, already greater than that of England, even if one sets aside altogether the liabilities in respect of inter-Allied debts.

The subject is too controversial to be pursued further, but it is surely clear that there is some fallacy in the reckoning of Sir John Simon and other British politicians, who simply convert at current rates francs into pounds and attempt to show that in 1924 each French tax-payer contributed £9 13*s*. to the State while the British tax-payer contributed £17 9*s*. There are so many ways of juggling with the figures that it is impossible to arrive at a simple statement which would be regarded by everybody as impeccable; but if there is one kind of juggling which

must be rejected, it is that which assumes that pounds and francs and dollars can be given an equivalent value for the people of the respective countries by their simple conversion in accordance with the exchange rates of the day.

It is not my intention to make any defence of French finance, which has been, as we shall see, shortsighted and unsound, but it will be well to dismiss certain facile and perhaps unfounded allegations which are commonly made against France.

The French, rightly or wrongly, feel that they are now paying a great deal. Taking the 1925 Budget in round figures at 35 milliard francs, one is appalled at the extraordinary increase since 1913 – when the franc was of course worth about 10*d.*, or one-fifth of a dollar. In 1913 the ordinary Budget amounted to just over 5 milliard francs. It has therefore been increased sevenfold. It would be idle to pretend that the burden is not onerous. The French are genuinely conscious of the weight imposed upon them, and it must always be remembered that in addition to taxation they have, largely out of a sense of public duty, subscribed enormously to loans of various kinds. Everybody must condemn the system of borrowing which was practised for far too many years. Everybody must be aware that the French State was only piling up difficulties for itself. It would have been better from the French point of view to have made a great levy for the liquidation of the War instead of accumulating an indebtedness which has reached staggering heights. M. Herriot has pointed out that during the War, from 1915 to 1918 inclusive, the State obtained in Long Term Loans 55½ milliard francs; in Defence Bonds a figure not clearly established; in advances from the Bank (Banque de France) nearly 18 milliards. The difference between the sums raised in taxation and those required in these years is about 144 milliard francs. But the loans continued. In 1920, 37 milliards were borrowed; in 1921, 24 milliards; in 1922, 17 milliards; in 1923, 18 milliards; in 1924, 5 milliards.

Thus France reaches a position in which, after having bor-

rowed the largest possible amounts and raising the smallest possible amounts in taxation, she is obliged to impose the maximum of taxation and obtain the minimum in the shape of loans. The *échéance* has arrived. Altogether the Internal Debt of France is reckoned at 277,850,000,000 paper francs, or 73,550,000,000 gold francs. Moreover, nearly half this debt is a floating debt, and in 1925 reimbursements running into tens of milliards of francs were due. In subsequent years the calls upon the Exchequer would, unless there were some consolidation, grow greater and greater. M. Clémentel thus analyses the Internal Debt:

Perpetual or Long Term Debt . .	Frs.	149,395,000,000
Short Term Debt	,,	37,174,000,000
Floating Debt (Treasury and National Defence Bonds) . . .	,,	61,500,000,000
Floating Debt (Treasury deposits) .	,,	6,781,000,000
Floating Debt (Advances of the Banque de France)	,,	23,000,000,000
A total of . .	,,	277,850,000,000

*

We reach the heart of the French financial problem when we examine how the budgetary expenditure of 1925 is composed. The service of the Public Debt absorbs a sum of 19½ milliards. The Military expenses amount to about 6 milliards. With other deductions this leaves for the ordinary Civil departments roughly 8 milliard francs. The disproportion is startling. The layman will see at a glance that such a state of affairs cannot last, for in addition to the service of the Public Debt provided for in the Budget, there are still greater demands on the Treasury, and the moment one attempts to meet them by new loans, the service of the Debt in succeeding years increases until, if the process were continued sufficiently long, the service of the

Public Debt would swallow up the entire Budget as at present conceived.

No wonder that the Bloc des Gauches on coming into power resolved that at the price of any sacrifice there should be no more borrowing. Unfortunately good resolutions of this kind are not easy to carry out, and the Government found itself obliged to have recourse to loans. Sooner or later it would seem that France will have to summon up her courage to cut the knot that is slowly – perhaps one should say quickly – strangling her.

From 1913 to 1924 it has been reckoned that the total expenditure of the French State was 426 milliards and that the total normal revenue was only 126 milliards. It must be confessed that even before the War the French system of finance was somewhat unsatisfactory in that there were far too many supplementary credits and expenditure unprovided for by the Budget proper. But of recent years the financial faults of France have been flagrant. There should have been maintained at all costs the principle of budgetary unity. But France found it convenient to make up an ordinary Budget which could have been made to balance – though in fact it did not – and outside this Budget, to establish what amounted to a second budget called the Budget of Recoverable Expenditure, in which the debit side was well filled and in which the credit side only contained a mystical evocation of French expectations on Germany. Obviously this Budget was kept going by means of loans. Never did a country cherish such vast illusions as France. It is not, however, fair to blame the Bloc National as alone responsible. It was not responsible for the financial conduct of the War, and however imperfectly, it did endeavour with success to reduce the deficits in each successive year. In 1919 it is estimated that the budgetary expenditure of France in excess of the receipts of France was altogether nearly 24 milliards. In 1920 the deficit was something over 19 milliards; in 1921 it was brought down

to 13 milliards; in 1922 it was 11½ milliards; in 1923 the deficit was less than 8½ milliards, and in 1924 (for which year the Bloc National was responsible) it is calculated that there was a shortage of 3 milliards. The heaviest spending year was 1920, when 39½ milliards were effectively disbursed. In 1921 there was a return to the figures of 1919 – 35½ milliards. In 1922 the expenditure had shrunk by a milliard; in 1923 it had been brought down to 32½ milliards, and in 1924 was also slightly reduced according to the official estimates. The Radical Budget of 1925 took a leap upwards, partly owing to the necessity of redeeming electoral promises to Civil servants and to pensioners. On the other hand, the budgetary provision for this expenditure had been steadily growing from 11½ milliards in 1919 to nearly 29 milliards in 1924, and between 33 and 34 milliards in 1925.

This improvement was, however, too slow, and it seemed at one moment as though France would be buried under a great landslide of her unfixed debt. Nobody seemed to appreciate the need for instant action. In 1923 there was another breach of the fundamental rules of sound financing. There should not only be a single Budget but it should be established annually. In view of the difficulties which were being experienced in the Ruhr, it was actually the intention of the Government to take bodily the general scheme of the 1923 Budget as the Budget of 1924. It is true that there was some reduction in the credits in the second Budget for the repair of the ruined north, for France, which had been spending money with a lavish hand in the devastated areas, in the belief that Germany would pay, now began to think of economies in this direction.

Happily France was shaken out of this disastrous indifference to financial realities by the sudden depreciation of the franc. The franc slipped downwards at appalling speed in the early months of 1924, and M. Poincaré, who had been unable to find time to consider the most vital of all French questions, now acted with characteristic energy. He drilled and dragooned his unwilling

troops, who were chiefly preoccupied with the Elections, and realized that belated reforms which would impose heavier burdens on the public would mean their defeat at the polls. M. Poincaré was indeed ruthless. He proposed the most drastic retrenchment in the State services, and even suspended reparation payments. He demanded new taxes. It was resolved to create a single State Budget by transferring the permanent charges of the so-called Budget of Recoverable Expenditure to the General Budget.

The awakening was rude, and M. Poincaré was compelled to appeal to American and to British Banks to assist him in saving the franc, but his action in the early months of 1924 was undoubtedly the most important financial action that had been taken since the War. The foolish theory on which Finance Ministers had justified themselves was swept away. The policy of perpetual loans was abandoned. The principle that for all State expenditure there should be provided State revenue was once more recognized. It was impossible suddenly to accept the full implications of this principle, but however much M. Poincaré may be blamed (or praised) for his previous policy, to him must go the credit of beginning the belated efforts to place public finances on proper foundations. It was for his successors – for M. Poincaré suffered the fate of all those who undertake to bell the cat – to proceed logically on the lines he indicated.

*

When the 1925 Budget was drawn up it was, theoretically at any rate, entirely balanced. M. Herriot, the Prime Minister, and M. Clémentel, the Finance Minister, in spite of the appalling legacy of the Bloc National, in spite of the immense strain on the French Treasury by the falling due of Bonds, definitely declared that the system of loans was to be brought to an end, and that there was to be no fiduciary inflation. This promise was not kept. Bonds for Treasury purposes were emitted continuously, and loans were raised at home and abroad. But

though the National Debt, which in 1913 stood at 31¾ milliards, in 1925 approached 450 milliards (Internal and External), it may properly be said that the situation was being faced, and that at last France was doing her best to avoid the bankruptcy which threatened. Unfortunately the need for fiduciary inflation then made itself felt and M. Herriot fell.

Always assuming that France will keep the issues vividly in mind and will not be deflected from the only sensible course, no matter how seriously her industry and commerce may temporarily suffer, it is possible to regard the future with a certain hopefulness. The next few years will be extremely anxious years. There is a poor State in a rich country. Financially France is badly off: economically she is extraordinarily prosperous. Will she survive the trials that are yet in store for her? There must of course be no panic if a catastrophe is to be avoided: the French must themselves remain confident. Nothing is more regrettable than the practice which one has seen of rich Frenchmen converting their wealth into foreign securities. It was this process of sending money abroad that brought down Germany. Anything which could be described as the evasion of capital on a large scale would complicate enormously the grave problem and would jeopardize France's future. That is why one cannot regard with equanimity the party strife which reached its most acute form at the beginning of 1925, when the *union sacrée* was never so necessary. A striking warning against the prevalent habit of creating panics was then offered by the experience of France. Both the Government and the Opposition, in their attempt to score off each other, perpetually alleged the existence of a "peril," with the result that the "peril" began to take shape. The supporters of the Government on the one hand, described every action of the Opposition as Fasciste. The Opposition, on the other hand, declared that the Government was preparing the way for Communism. Both sides manufactured and then magnified "perils" which at first were purely imagi-

nary, and the consequences of this insistence upon danger were in fact serious. Probably 17 milliards were sent abroad.

The Opposition certainly did something to destroy confidence, but the Government also, in dividing the country into two camps at a moment when a political truce was imperative, was pursuing an unwise policy. What could the ordinary man in the street suppose when he heard the politicians hurling their allegations at each other? He began to believe that in reality France was on the eve of grave events, and that the franc was about to follow the downward path already taken by the currencies of Germany and Austria, of Hungary and other countries.

M. Herriot was blamed, too, because he had raised, at an inopportune moment, questions which aroused the greatest passions. The raising of the religious issue, for example, was lamentably untimely. It did not present itself in any acute form, and the first duty of any Government faced with a great financial task was to reconcile all Frenchmen and to appeal to financial patriotism. It is unnecessary to decide between those who take this or that view of the general policy of M. Herriot, but it was certainly necessary for the French to rally as a nation in defence of the franc. Perhaps it is the moral element which more than any other will decide whether the difficulties can be overcome. While Frenchmen continue to set up all kinds of bogies, while they discover dangers at every corner, there will certainly be ground for uneasiness. If they would only join hands and cease the search for anything and everything designed to shake their own confidence in themselves and in their country, some of the troubles would vanish as if by enchantment. Those who sow fear are the enemies of France; those who clamour most loudly for party purposes about the possibilities of disaster are precisely those who will make disaster possible. Nothing could be clearer than this: that if half the country cries out that the other half is ruining it, and the second half replies that, on the contrary, ruin is rendered inevitable by the other side, then the very

concentration of the attention upon ruin is an invitation to ruin.

But Frenchmen will surely have the good sense to see in time that it is not by frightening each other that anything can be achieved, but only by courageous co-operation in handling fiscal problems.

Chapter II

TAXATION, DIRECT AND INDIRECT

ALTHOUGH it was deemed impossible to pay for the War during its progress, it should nevertheless be noted that a number of reforms were introduced. The War Profits Tax – which has never yielded all that might have been expected from it – was established. Later, a business turnover tax was instituted – which has the effect of putting an indirect tax on every article bought and sold in the country. There was also a special tax on articles of luxury.

After the Armistice, the Customs' rates were raised by the application of a coefficient. Other methods of taxation were intensified, such as the stamp duties and an imposition on Stock Exchange transactions. A very serious tax, which may be regarded as a tax on capital, has been screwed up to the sticking point – Inheritance Duties – which are extremely high in France.

But the most notable of all means of raising money is the Income Tax, which began to come into operation in the early years of the War, and was afterwards greatly increased.

Something should be said about the Income Tax which, although unpopular and considered to be inquisitorial, nevertheless yields a fair proportion of the revenue of the State. The yield has grown year after year. Starting at about 50 million francs, it climbed up in 1923 to nearly $3\frac{3}{4}$ milliards, and this figure must be taken as a mere beginning. The Income Tax is destined to supply a very considerable portion of the French revenue. It is a progressive tax ranging from 2 per cent. to 44 per cent. on the larger incomes. There is plenty of room for improvement, but it must be remembered that until recently there has been a stolid opposition to this kind of direct taxation. It is against the traditions of the French, who are unusually secretive about their personal financial position. In England the Income Tax has been in operation for generations and is fully

accepted. It will take time before all resistance to it is overcome in France, where it upsets the habits and is contrary to the instincts of the people. Broadly speaking, the French have always preferred indirect taxation, but to-day it is possible that saturation point has been reached in respect of the taxes on commodities.

The French have deep-seated conceptions of liberty which they hold are violated by the obligation to disclose their income. They do not so much mind paying heavily upon their purchases, but they feel that nobody – neighbour, relative or State official – has a right to inquire whether they are rich or poor. Even the majority of wives are ignorant of their husband's earnings, and most children have the haziest notion of their father's fortune. Nor is it possible to estimate the resources of a man by the sort of life he leads and the kind of house in which he lives. Attempts are being made to base the Income Tax on external appearances, but it is to be feared that these external appearances are often misleading.

The Frenchman, unlike the Englishman and the American, is not as a rule troubled by the fetish of maintaining external appearances. Moreover the system of book-keeping in France has not hitherto been as efficient as in some other countries. Further, there is an apprehension that tax-collectors may divulge their knowledge, or use it for political ends, and it is undoubtedly true that officials have not learned how to separate public duties from political and private intrigue.

*

It is difficult to alter the habits of a people, and when the inadequate collection of the Income Tax in France is criticized, the British at any rate should remember how resentful they themselves are of taxes on commodities, which the French pay cheerfully.

I take the figures of Income Tax returns for a recent year, and I find that there is a remarkably even distribution of wealth in

France. One cannot accept these returns as altogether accurate, but they do furnish interesting indications. So far as one can judge by them, there are exceedingly few persons who may be called, according to the British or American standards, really rich. The tables available show that there were 272,274 tax-payers with incomes ranging from 6,000 to 10,000 francs; 320,127 tax-payers with incomes ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 francs; 84,464 tax-payers with incomes ranging from 20,000 to 30,000 francs; 55,979 tax-payers with incomes between 30,000 and 50,000 francs. There were 31,015 incomes between 50,000 and 100,000 francs; 12,277 between 100,000 and 200,000 francs; 2,794 between 200,000 and 300,000 francs; 1,607 between 300,000 and 500,000 francs. Those who paid on incomes from half a million to a million francs only numbered 641; while 197 persons paid on incomes of more than a million.

M. François Marsal has drawn up a table which purports to show that the taxes on income and capital make up a much larger portion of the State revenue than is generally supposed. He adopts a new nomenclature, for, as he says, the old nomenclature means nothing. Taxes must be grouped into four different categories: there are (1) Taxes on Capital (Death Duties, etc.); (2) Taxes on Income; (3) Taxes on Business, (*a*) Luxury Taxes, (*b*) Taxes on Products of Current Consumption; (4), Economic Defence Taxes (Customs, etc.). The receipts from these various categories estimated for the years 1924 and 1925 were as follows:

	1924 Francs	1925 Francs
1. Taxes on Capital . .	4,006,339,500	6,575,886,000
2. Taxes on Income . .	5,550,472,178	7,999,374,054
3. Taxes on Business:		
(*a*) Taxes on Luxury .	4,373,848,786	6,066,577,714
(*b*) Taxes on Products of Current Consumption.	3,630,191,514	5,198,916,286

	1924 Francs	1925 Francs
4. Taxes for Economic Defence:		
(*a*) Customs Duties .	2,288,037,400	2,282,657,000
(*b*) Taxes on Sugar .	375,418,000	172,600,000

It is necessary to repeat the warning that almost all current French figures must be taken with some reserve, for it is a long time before they are finally and officially verified. But for what they are worth, the estimates of M. François Marsal show that Income and Capital are indeed taxed to about the same extent as commodities. Undoubtedly the general opinion is that it would be dangerous, in a country like France, to impose Capital and Income too heavily: to do so would be to destroy France's chief asset, namely, her economic prosperity.

There are several State monopolies which are not unremunerative. The Tobacco Monopoly, which was originally instituted by Colbert in 1674 and afterwards suppressed by the Revolution, was re-established by decree in 1810, and definitely organized by the law of April 28, 1916. Tobacco is cultivated under the control of the Government. After all expenses are paid, there is a net profit of more than a milliard francs.

The Match Monopoly is not so lucrative. An attempt was made to dispose of it to a private company, but it failed. A profit of 70 or 80 million francs is made.

The profits on the working of the Postal, Telegraphic and Telephonic department diminished to vanishing point, and at the beginning of the War a deficit began to show itself, which was afterwards aggravated.

*

It is the Treasury which has had the greatest difficulties. The strain upon it at all times since the War has been tremendous, but with the maturing of Short Term securities, the pressure

was terrific. It was realized that a great Consolidating Loan was necessary to remove the menace of these mass calls for repayment. The National Defence Bonds are particularly dangerous since they are emitted for 3, 6, 9 and 12 months. For years the State depended upon these National Defence Bonds and similar issues to obtain operating funds, but it was not surprising that the demand for them began to weaken when the French, as well as the foreign observer, saw the folly of unchecked borrowings. The real rate of interest had necessarily to be increased in order to tempt the French public, and the Internal Loan in the autumn of 1924 was, like earlier loans, scarcely a success, although interest amounting to 8·7 per cent. was offered. To disguise to some extent this high rate of interest, the device was adopted of paying only 5 per cent. annually, but of adding a bonus of 50 per cent. at the end of ten years. Thus, for every 100 francs of new money received for the needs of the Treasury, France in a few years will have to return 200 francs. The Banks naturally asked for high remuneration for their accommodation, and although the American money market appeared still to be open to the Government, it became apparent that borrowing at home, even were it possible, on the scale required, would be eventually ruinous. The objection to borrowing abroad was that France would lose her liberty of movement. A country which falls under heavy obligations to foreign Banks can no longer freely pursue a national policy. The first intimation of this unpleasant truth was given when M. Poincaré obtained in America credits for 100 million dollars in order to combat foreign speculation which tended to depreciate the franc. It was then plainly suggested to him that American Banks expected him to pursue certain financial policies, and moreover it was patent to all onlookers that the acceptance of the Dawes Report was more or less imposed upon France. Foreign policy, as well as domestic policy, may thus be dictated by the creditors of France if France becomes still further dependent upon foreign Banks. Resent-

ment would arise not only because of national pride being touched, but because France might really suffer were she to be hampered in her policy.

Talk of a Dawes Plan for France shocked the country, and although an attempt was made to soften the blow by declaring that in any event there would be none of the disagreeable features of control which figure in the Dawes Plan as applied to Germany, still it must be recognized that any foreign inquiry into France's financial capacity, any extensive foreign assistance, would put France in shackles. Already the creditors of France who had lent her money during the War were clamouring for repayment, and were exercising considerable pressure on the French Government in its dealings with Germany.

If the Treasury looked to the French money market for relief from its immediate difficulties, it was faced with the dwindling of confidence, and if it looked abroad it was faced with the possibility of being subjected to the irksome supervision of the foreigner. All French financiers who frankly examined the situation were appalled at the problem. If the Treasury could not, at a given moment, meet the State liabilities, then a complete crash was probable, and by hook or by crook it was therefore vital that the Treasury should be kept replenished. But how? There was the rub.

Further, there are not only the direct commitments of the State to be considered. A system of indirect borrowing had been elaborated under which, for example, the Crédit National issued loans for reconstruction purposes to the nominal value of 27 milliards. The State was finally responsible. It guaranteed the services of these loans. Other guarantees were given by the State for loans issued by industrial groups, by départements and by towns. Probably these other loans reach a total of 7 milliards.

Any belief that there is some short cut out of these difficulties

is doomed to disappointment. In 1781 Necker wrote with simple wisdom: "If the happy choice of the moment, and the attractive form of a loan, are elements of success, one cannot nevertheless conceal the truth that administrative genius resides above all in discretion, orderliness and good faith, and that one must not abandon the proved and simple methods for formulas which may be striking by their ingenuity."

But M. Caillaux, to whom so many Frenchmen look as the saviour of the nation, has also disclaimed the magic wand which he has been expected to produce. In the preface of the book, *L'Emprunt Forcé*, he has written: "The financial pharmacopœia is more restricted than one imagines. It is in vain that one will look in it for an elixir which will rapidly restore health. One finds on its shelves only two medicines, simple and disagreeable, which will produce results only if the patient follows a severe régime. These two medicines are labour and economy. As for the régime which must be followed, it consists of taxation and again taxation, the inexorable taxation of opulence. Those are the remedies. Outside them all is chimerical."

It is necessary to repeat these commonplaces, which France has been inclined to forget. Ever since 1914 France has been looking for a miracle. She has muddled along empirically while awaiting some mystical solution. In the Middle Ages there was a search for the philosophers' stone. Paris was the hermetic centre where the alchemists united, and under the arches of Notre Dame, studied the hieroglyphics on the walls on which Nicholas Flamel had written, in cabalistic characters, the secret of transforming lead into gold. The green lion, the *lait de la Vierge*, the magical mercury which would transmute everything, was for them a scientific reality. In their frantic endeavours to discover the formula they resorted to the weirdest practices, and some of them even had resort to demoniacal rites. Neither by their pseudo-science nor by their sorcery did they attain their purpose. And to-day it is not by witchcraft nor by experiments

in alembics that fiscal salvation will be obtained. All serious French thinkers realize that no financial "black mass" will be of avail. A rigorous road must be trodden with faith and courage to the very end.

THE PROBLEM OF INFLATION

WHILE the advances of the Banque de France to the Treasury stood at the end of 1924 at 22 milliard francs the note circulation, according to the law of September 1920, should not have exceeded the value of 41 milliards. Various legal expedients were resorted to from time to time by the Treasury to obtain further advances. The ordinary banks were asked to lend money on Government securities, and they in their turn borrowed money from the Banque de France on these securities. Technically the advances from the Banque to the State were thus kept within the limits assigned, though in reality those limits were exceeded. It was not until the beginning of 1925 that there were irregularities. In January, February, and March the Banque progressively emitted an excess number of banknotes amounting to two or three milliards. Unhappily M. Herriot was hypnotized by the catch phrase that any kind of inflation in any conditions meant disaster; and this additional currency was dissimulated. It was with a shock of surprise that the world learned in April that the weekly returns of the Banque de France had been drawn up in such a manner as to conceal unauthorized inflation, even while the Prime Minister was fulminating against inflation and declaring that it would never be allowed. Both the Banque and the Government placed themselves in a false position and the result was a ministerial and a financial crisis. Urgent measures had to be taken after the disclosure to raise the limit of emission and to regularize retrospectively the illegal proceedings. French credit could not but suffer by these occult devices which sooner or later had ineluctably to be confessed.

The mistake was in adopting too rigorously the doctrine that inflation must be fatal. Inflation for the purpose of covering budgetary charges, the printing of paper instead of balancing the Budget, would certainly be fatal; but the particular figure of 41 milliards which was fixed arbitrarily is not sacrosanct.

Neither the Banque nor the Government can directly control the legitimate currency needs of the country. Those needs are bound to increase with the increase of prices, and there are a variety of other factors which must determine the precise fiduciary level. The danger is that if barriers are not set up there will be a constant temptation to increase the currency purely for Treasury purposes as distinct from commercial needs. The shortage of banknotes became a reality calling for a frank statement to Parliament. M. Caillaux as Finance Minister later raised the note issue to 51 milliards and the State borrowings from the Bank to 32 milliards. Any financial expert would point out that a capital levy, a forced loan, a voluntary contribution, or any similar expedient such as was contemplated, would not lessen but perhaps increase the need of banknotes.

The exponents of systematic inflation in France are not very numerous or influential. They look at the example of the German State which escaped its difficulties by making the old mark valueless and thus wiping out its internal debts. It would indeed be possible for France to obliterate a great part of her liability if she were to take this course, but it would be a perilous course and nobody can foresee the consequences. On the other hand, deflation, in the present circumstances, would be equally risky, for not only would trade be upset but the Budget receipts would come down with a run, and all estimates would be thrown completely out.

One must approve the spirited efforts made to introduce the cheque into commercial and private life in France. It is amazing how archaic France is in this respect. The largest sums often change hands in banknotes, and even large firms are reluctant to give or to accept cheques. The consequence is that a great deal more paper money is wanted in France than in a thoroughly up-to-date business-like country.

When the banknotes already issued in France almost touched what is known as the "ceiling," a lively propaganda was begun

in favour of the extension of the use of the cheque. It should have been thought of long before and active steps should have been taken to spread the idea of the substitution of the cheque for cash wherever possible. The State itself had always discouraged the cheque, and some of the State departments had declined to accept the cheques of citizens for the payment of taxes. An inquiry which was made among the high functionaries of the French Treasury showed that only a few of them had personal banking accounts. This reveals an almost incredibly old-fashioned cast of mind, and the task of the Finance Minister who wishes to reform French practices is no easy one.

It was resolved, however, to set the example. All officials except the most humble class are in future to be paid by cheque; the Deputies and Senators, instead of receiving remuneration in cash, will receive it by cheque; all the administrative departments are informed that they must accept the cheques of the public.

It has been pointed out that there is a notable historical precedent. In 1844 England overcame a financial crisis by adopting more generally the cheque system. It is strange that France should learn the lesson only now. At any rate, it is on the popularization of the cheque – by no means a minor matter – that French financiers begin to count.

In the light of what has happened there is a bitter flavour in the Herriot Government's expression of hostility to inflation in any form whatever. " It is time to speak courageously to the nation," declared a Minister. " To give even the War victims satisfaction by the aid of artifices would be a procedure morally condemnable. Whatever happens, inflation must not be tolerated. After the War of Secession the United States traversed a difficult period and there was recourse to inflation. At last a day came when President Grant decided that not another Note should be printed no matter what might be the consequences. However heroic may be the obligations which France will have

to accept, it is essential that everything should be subordinated to the necessity of bringing to an end the policy of expedients."

*

It is almost unnecessary to state that gold passed out of circulation early in the War, and except for special purposes, no gold pieces have since been minted. Besides the paper notes, the Chambers of Commerce were authorized to issue small currency, and to-day the value of coins of low denomination amounts to about 166 million francs. The Bank of France reports a position which, when the circumstances are taken into account, may be considered to be fairly good. Its gold reserves in 1913 averaged 3,343 million francs, and its silver reserves 629 million francs. At the beginning of the War gold and silver were called in, and in 1915 the specie reserve was 4,700 million francs. In 1917 gold and silver reserves averaged 5,517 million francs. In 1919 they reached 5,852 million francs, and this average is being maintained. On January 2, 1925, the gold reserve was 5,545 million, with a silver reserve of 306 millions. There had been a steady increase over a long period, and the ratio which the reserves bore to the currency issue was about 14·31.

In spite of the stringent laws against traffic in gold, it is estimated that private persons still hold gold pieces to the value of 2 milliards. Many French folk were in the habit of piling up their savings and keeping them in all kinds of hiding-places. Patriotism induced many of them to give up their concealed treasures, but there is undoubtedly evidence that gold coins exist in the country in large numbers. The State has addressed from time to time pressing invitations to the holders of gold to surrender their savings, but it has never offered more than twenty paper francs for a gold louis. How then can it be expected that a Frenchman who did not at once, when the franc was still a franc, take his gold to the Treasury, should do so now? Moral and sentimental reasons are outweighed by the

more material reasons which persuade him to stick to pieces which may some day be in circulation again.

But a method which may be more efficacious has been proposed. The holder of gold realizes that his wealth is unproductive and he is often embarrassed by its clandestine possession. It is suggested that the State should offer a higher value, and should pay in six months' Bonds. Assuming, for example, that the offer were to hold good for a period of three months, and that the payment was in six months' Bonds, the State could make good use of the gold and would be in a position to redeem whatever Bonds were presented.

*

The official discount rate for the Bank of France which stood at 5 per cent. in 1922, rose to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. at the beginning of 1924 and then reached 6 per cent. Interest on advances was raised from $6\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 per cent. and finally to 8 per cent. The prevalent rates of interest in France on new issues run to 7 per cent. in the case of most of the important industries, and are often higher. Most of the Banks show much prosperity and play an increasing part in the life of the country. They show a considerable increase in discount transactions, and have extended large credits to commerce and industry.

The foreign Banks established in France are numerous. There are a number of American Banking establishments installed, while three British Banks have branches not only in Paris but in many of the larger towns. The Canadian Banks have also taken up central positions in Paris.

There are various types of Banks in France. The only Bank of Issue in the metropolitan country is the Banque de France, but in the Colonies and in the Protectorates there exist various establishments which enjoy similar privileges. They are the Banque de l'Algérie, which issues banknotes in Algeria and Tunisia; the Banque de l'Indo-Chine, issuing banknotes in Indo-China and the French settlements in Oceania, New Cale-

donia and those in India and the Somalis Coast; the Banque de la Martinique; the Banque de la Guadeloupe; the Banque de Guyana, the Banque de la Réunion, the Banque de l'Afrique Occidentale, whose privilege extends to Sénégal, French Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey and the Congo. In Madagascar also a Bank of Issue has been founded. In the Protectorates there is the Banque d'État du Maroc, and the Banque du Syrie et du Grand Liban.

Then there are the Deposit Banks – credit establishments with many branches throughout the country – and Regional Banks. The process which is to be noted in other countries, namely the grouping of large Banks and the absorption of the smaller institutions, is to be observed in France. There have been many amalgamations, and to-day – apart from the Regional Banks which deal with special conditions in limited districts – it may be said that there are six chief credit establishments. The oldest is the Comptoir National d'Escompte, which has a paid-up capital of 250 million francs; the Crédit Lyonnais, the Société Générale, la Banque Nationale de Crédit, have the same paid-up capital. Somewhat smaller, but still powerful, are the Crédit Commercial de France and the Crédit Industriel et Commercial. The Regional Banks, which are numerous, are disposed to grant long-term loans because they are in closer touch with their clients. Then there are what may be specifically described as the Business Banks which, unlike the Deposit Banks that transact short-term loans, invest their capital in industrial affairs. They are run, generally speaking, by a limited number of capitalists, and do not solicit other deposits. They found, or are connected with, syndicates and joint stock companies, and their activities chiefly concern the issue of industrial shares.

There is a fundamental difference between the two groups of the Deposit Banks and the Business Banks. The most important of the latter are the Banque de Paris et des Pays-

Bas and the Banque de l'Union Parisienne. There may also be mentioned the Crédit Mobilier; the Banque Transatlantique; and the Société Financière Française et Coloniale. The private Banks which transact both kinds of business are numerous and not unimportant. The Mortgage Banks, such as the Crédit Foncier, are administered under the surveillance of the Finance Minister, and lend large sums to the Communes and to private landlords – funds obtained through the issue of Bonds on real estate. The Crédit National was founded in 1919 to facilitate the reconstruction of France. Its functions differ from those of ordinary banking establishments. Its principal mission is to pay, on behalf of the State and within the limit of its resources, indemnities to those who have suffered war damages, and to advance money for repairs. It is also authorized to give credits to commerce and to industry, and it is possible that this may become its permanent and principal duty.

FOREIGN DEBTS

THE Inventory of the State finances at the beginning of the Thirteenth Legislature was drawn up by M. Clémentel at the end of 1924. It is a formidable document which it is impossible to summarize, but the General Assets and Liabilities of France should be set out as they appear in this official Balance Sheet as follows:

ASSETS

	Millions of paper francs	Millions of paper francs
State Property:		
Goods which cannot be evaluated (Museums, Statues, etc.)		Unrated
Property used for public services		9,400
Other property		1,250
Woods and forests		5,300
Sarre mines		1,400
Railroads, capital reverting to State at end of concessions		70,000
Telegraph and telephone lines and equipment		5,500
Liquidation of war stocks, amounts still due		580
Capitalization of Taxes:		
Permanent taxes	596,000	
Non-permanent taxes (war profits)	3,500	
Total	599,500	599,500
Reparations and War Debts:		
Fixed annuities of Dawes Plan	103,900	
Additional annuities of Dawes Plan	Unrated	
War and other loans made by France	Unrated	
	103,900	103,900
Grand Total.		796,830
		or gold francs 210,905

LIABILITIES

Public Debt:	Millions of paper francs	Millions of paper francs
Internal Debt:		
Perpetual and long term debt	149,395	
Short term debt	37,174	
Floating debt (Treasury and Nat. Defence Bonds)	61,500	
Floating debt (Treasury deposit accounts)	6,781	
Floating debt (Bank of France loan)	23,000	
Total	277,850	277,850
External Debt:		
Political debt	Unrated	
Commercial debt	19,450	
Total	19,450	19,450
Extinguishable Debt:		
War pensions (capitalized)	34,500	
Military and civil pensions (capitalized)	30,000	
Total	64,500	64,500
Total		361,800
Other Accounts:		
Completion of Reconstruction in Devastated Regions		22,000
To railroads, for joint funds 1925 and 1926		520
Budget of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones, 1925 new developments		500
Capitalization of permanent military expenses		111,000
Capitalization of permanent Civil Service charges		146,000
Capitalization of all non-permanent expenses (as amortisable)		18,500
Grand Total		660,320
	or gold francs	174,769

It will be observed that in this Inventory, which shows a balance of State assets over State liabilities, there are several important omissions and several doubtful items. There is, for example, no inclusion of the foreign debt of France. Had it been put in, the credit balance would have been wiped out. One wonders if it was not the intention of M. Clémentel to convey a fairly optimistic view to the public, but a more pessimistic view to those who were capable of analysing his figures. There is much that persuades one that the Inventory was meant as a discreet intimation that France, while not repudiating her debts, cannot for years to come begin to pay them.

It is true that France, in her turn, has credits on many countries of which no account is taken in the Balance Sheet – on Russia, Poland, Belgium and the countries of the Little Entente – but these credits cannot properly be offset against the French debts. In the first place, they amount only to between 15 and 16 milliard paper francs according to certain calculations, and in the second place, for the most part they are irrecoverable.

As for the device of capitalizing State revenues received from taxation in order to show a balance, it is open to the most serious objections. Taxes are imposed in order to cover the services of the debt and the Military and Civil charges, and everything depends on whether in fact they do cover these charges. It is begging the question to capitalize such a variable and earmarked revenue and to assume that it will balance the outgoings. It is obvious that if there really exists a discrepancy between the annual charges and the annual revenue, it is far too easily possible to hide it by putting down an arbitrary figure for capitalized taxation. The whole point is whether in each successive year France can present a balanced Budget. Until 1925 she certainly failed to do so, and the resort to borrowing made it more and more difficult in each succeeding year to buckle the Budget. There have been severe criticisms of this capitalization. The *Temps* wrote: "Any industrial or commercial enterprise

which conceived the idea of submitting to its shareholders or to the Tribunal of Commerce an inventory established in this fashion, would incur something worse than reproaches."

Again, it is complained that among the assets of the State it is hardly possible to include railways, telephonic and telegraphic systems and so forth, which cannot be realized unless it is indeed the intention of the State to pledge them for the payment of creditors.

Moreover, while a theoretical balance is all very well, the liabilities of the State arrive at maturity at fixed epochs, and must then be met. It is also to be remarked that a number of loans have since been raised – notably a loan of 100 million dollars in America and an Internal loan of 5 milliard francs reimbursable in ten years. There are besides annual Départemental and Colonial loans which may be estimated at 15 milliard francs, guaranteed by the State, omitted from the table. On the whole, there is much that is fictitious about this Inventory. It is scarcely helpful.

In 1925 France had many special liabilities. On February 16 about 334 million francs of National Defence Bonds fell due. On July 1 a total of 3,290 million francs of Crêdit National Bonds were redeemable at the desire of the holders on that date, or on the same date of 1928, 1934 or 1940. On September 25, 8,237 million francs of three- and five-year Bonds mature, though they can at the desire of the holder be redeemed two years later. On December 8 there is a total of 10,090 million francs of three-, six- and ten-year Bonds redeemable at that date, or, if the holder wishes, in 1928 or 1932. In 1925 France was also called upon to pay $59,663,611 to the United States for the service of various American loans and the interest on the payment of American War Stocks, while England should receive £11,727,856 for War Stocks and French Treasury Bonds held in England. To Holland was due 3,300,000 florins, to Argentine 971,290 gold pesos, to Uruguay 3,562,500 gold

pesos, to Canada $12,650 and to Egypt £E.1,086,250: the total is reckoned roughly at 1,400 million paper francs.

For reconstruction purposes there should be spent seven milliard francs partly raised by a Crédit National Loan operation and partly in National Defence Bonds. It therefore became necessary either to borrow more money abroad or to offer Consolidation issues – or to have recourse to both expedients. The proposals for a Consolidation issue may be divided into three classes – a Short Term issue bearing the current market rate of interest, a Long Term issue, with low interest rates and tax exemption features, and a Long Term issue with still lower interest rate and lottery features. M. Caillaux offered a 4 per cent. loan guaranteed at 95 francs to the £.

In a separate section of the Clémentel Inventory the External Debts were, in fact, shown, but the interest on the American Debts was omitted. It has therefore been necessary to include it in the table printed below, which shows the position as expressed in gold francs at the beginning of 1925:

EXTERNAL DEBT

	Gold francs
Political Debt:	
United States ($2,933,265,231·96)	15,195,000,000
Interest on above ($650,051,228·67)	3,350,000,000
Great Britain (£445,218,386 17*s.* 10*d.*)	11,231,000,000
Interest on above (£174,184,514 3*s.* 2*d.*)	4,394,000,000
Total	34,170,000,000
Commercial debt (Market loans, bank credits, etc.):	
United States	3,156,000,000
Great Britain	1,513,000,000
Japan	116,000,000
Holland	114,000,000
Argentina	97,000,000

	Gold Francs
Uruguay	72,000,000
Canada	30,000,000
Egypt	51,000,000
Total	5,149,000,000
Grand Total	39,319,000,000

*

The public has been made acquainted with the French attitude towards the External Debts. Put bluntly, it is that France does not desire to shirk her obligations, but at the same time is hardly in a position to begin payments, and moreover, hopes for easy terms, and perhaps some measure of cancellation.

M. Clémentel expressed the hope that the study of this problem might be approached in an atmosphere of sympathy and of mutual desire for the conclusion of an understanding equitable to all concerned. If the purely juridical ground is abandoned and there is taken a higher view of co-operation and of equity, rigorous justice would seem to require, in the view of the French, the general addition of all expenses of war and their repartition among the Allied States proportionally to the riches of each, and without taking into account the special engagements which momentary necessities imposed. It is argued that the War was fought on French soil by the Allies, in order that Germany should not obtain a predominant position. The choice of the battlefield meant a saving of time, men and money for the Allies of France, but saddled France with damages which should be taken into account.

There is a strong desire to link up the repayment of loans to France with the receipts by France from Germany. Public opinion cannot admit that the French should be left without a legitimate counterpart, in the regulation of inter-Allied Debts, to a reduction of any kind in the Schedule of Payments (of 1921),

which remains the law for all parties concerned. The Dawes Plan is regarded merely as the machinery by which the execution of the Schedule of Payments is to be begun. France does not consider the German Debt reduced in spite of the Dawes Plan, and will not consider it to be so reduced unless the French Debt to America and England is reduced. The proposal for the grouping together of all the expenses of the war in men, money and kind, and for the calling upon each nation to pay in accordance with its means and in accordance with what it has already paid in men, money or kind, originated during the Peace Conference of 1919. There is naturally great resentment at the charge that France is a defaulter, and it is retorted that there have indeed been defaults since the War, but they have not been on the part of France. There have been defaults on the part of ex-enemy countries, and there have also been defaults on the part of those countries which were with France during the War. There have been material defaults, but there have been, above all, moral defaults. The debt which was contracted in the common prosecution of the War cannot, it is urged, be regarded as an ordinary commercial transaction. The purpose of the War borrowings was not to serve the selfish and single interests of France; the purpose of the War borrowings was to enable France to hold the enemy at bay until the Allies of France could throw their forces in the field. Thus France was serving America and serving England quite as much as she was serving herself, and was beyond question the chief sufferer.

Were America to insist upon the strict payment of the Debt there might be a collapse of French credit which would not benefit America, and would certainly wipe out the services which America has rendered to France. Nobody knows at this moment what it is possible for France to pay and when. The expectations of France on Germany have been disappointed, and a financial position which was not anticipated has been created. Germany has been granted a moratorium and it may even be

held that the Dawes Plan, in spite of the reservations of M. Clémentel, represents an exceedingly serious reduction of the German debt. France therefore demands in all fairness that the treatment accorded to her should be at least as favourable as that accorded to Germany. When the whole world has tried to persuade France that leniency towards Germany is necessary, it is not reasonable that France herself should be pressed for immediate payments.

In America and in England it has been objected that France is putting forward a ridiculous claim when she says that because England and America came to her help they are, therefore, morally bound to shoulder her War expenses. "What!" it is cried, "you accept our help, you profess to be grateful for it, and then, when the victory is won, you grumble because the help has not been greater, and because we do not feel disposed to take upon ourselves your financial burdens! We have given you much more than we need have given, and when you ask for more and abuse us for reminding you of what is due, you are displaying a singular ingratitude."

On the moral side, everything in the long run works down to this question: did England and America go generously, spontaneously, unnecessarily to the assistance of France, or did they fight on their own behalf, for their own purposes, which together constitute a common purpose? The French assert that other countries did not come into the war purely out of a gratuitous sense of chivalry, for the *beaux yeux* of France. Their own interests were at stake. Is this contention true?

I think it would be wrong for Washington utterly to ignore the common-cause theory, but Paris undoubtedly over-emphasizes it. The Allies were interested in the defeat of Germany, but they had not an altogether equal interest. If it is foolish to assume that their motives were perfectly unselfish, it is also foolish to suppose that their motives were entirely selfish. Their motives were mingled. France had most at stake, England had

much less at stake, America had very little at stake. It is therefore impossible to accept, without the gravest reservations, the theory of the common cause.

At the same time it appears to me that America would be wise to consider the possibilities of scaling down the French Debt. The Baldwin settlement on behalf of England made it more difficult for America to offer better terms to France, but unless I am mistaken, the Baldwin settlement is generally condemned in Europe as premature, and as constituting a partial solution of a problem which should only have been considered as a whole. In so far as it crystallizes American views about the treatment of other European debtors, it is deplorable.

Frank Simonds has definitely stated that neither now nor hereafter will arguments based on special claims of France for privileged treatment obtain any hearing so far as ultimate payment in full is concerned, but, on the other hand, America is ready to listen to any statement which indicates the necessity of a moratorium and the spreading of payments over a longer period of years than that foreshadowed in the Baldwin agreement.

Each country is entitled to judge for itself to what degree it can afford to be generous; and to indulge in recriminations and to apply harsh epithets even to an exigent creditor, is supremely grotesque. For my part, with a long and intimate knowledge of the French financial possibilities, I will only venture to suggest to my American friends that in the long run it would be good business, common sense, and enlightened self-interest, to extend to France the most generous terms which are consistent with the national sentiment of financial rectitude.

*

The British have taken a somewhat different view of the French indebtedness. It is dictated by the special position in which England stands at once towards her Continental debtors and her American creditors.

England owes to the United States, after various payments, over £900,000,000. On the other hand, Allied debts owing to England include: France, £625,000,000; Italy, £533,300,000; Russia, £722,000,000; Yugo-Slavia, £28,000,000; Greece, £25,000,000; Roumania, £23,000,000. Much of this money is irrecoverable. England devoted her borrowings from the United States to the prosecution of the War, and a large proportion of these borrowings were really not on her own behalf but were on behalf of her Allies, and were simply turned over to them. England means to pay her debts to the United States, but although she must regard a considerable part of her Continental credits as worthless, she believes she is entitled at least to ask from Europe payments equivalent to those which she is under obligation to make to the United States. Germany, under the Dawes Plan, may be expected to pay something which can be used to reimburse America, but England cannot accept a position in which the only substantial receipts which she may expect from the Continent would be based upon the normal yield of the reparation annuities.

Therefore she demanded from France two kinds of payments: first, there should be fixed annual amounts to be paid by France irrespective of the actual receipts from the Dawes annuities in a particular year; second, there should be a further annual charge on the French share in the Dawes annuities. In any case England does not seek to recover from the Continent anything more than is necessary for the punctual payment of her debt to America. It cannot be disputed that the offer is, as thus formulated, fair and generous.

But as seen by the French, its value depends upon what percentage of the debt is asked directly from France, and what percentage from the French share of German payments. The principal objection to the Balfour Note – which was partly remedied by the Churchill Note in February 1925 – was that England, in asking from the Continent only sufficient to pay

America, appeared to make France responsible for German default. The less Germany paid, the more France would have to pay.

France protested against the principle by which her outgoings would increase in inverse ratio to her incomings. That unpleasant aspect of the Balfour Note has been removed. England is prepared to take a certain risk of German default under the Dawes Plan, and France's fixed annuity will not be subject to fluctations because of a German failure.

It is difficult to see how France can complete a settlement of her debt towards England before completing a settlement of her debt towards America, and vice versa. The operation should be a single operation. England cannot permit American claims upon France to enjoy any priority, but French resources cannot be determined until the terms of her settlement with America are known.

As I conclude this book the British have offered extremely favourable terms to France—they are prepared to take only twelve and a half million pounds a year for sixty-two years, instead of the twenty million pounds which the British Treasury had previously counted upon. M. Caillaux, though reluctant to pay more than ten million pounds a year, could not reject these terms. They will, however, only become the definitive basis of an accord if America is prepared to show equal generosity. Obviously England cannot consent to reduce her claims on France merely to enable France to pay more to the United States. M. Caillaux, agreeing tentatively to place the whole responsibility of French payments upon the French Treasury, transferring no portion of the responsibility on to German shoulders, yet demands that the bargain should be revised if German annuities to France ever fall below French annual liabilities to England and America.

In endeavouring to trace the outlines of the general French financial position and of the External Debts' position, one has

to remember that events may move rapidly, and that for better or for worse there may be sudden changes. Even an early settlement of the debts' problem is not impossible.

But, whatever happens, this brief statement should hold good in essence, and should have more than a retrospective interest. It will be seen that it is impossible to predict the future of France. All that one can say is that, although the task of French authorities is extremely arduous, it is by no means hopeless, and given wise statesmanship and an appeasement of the political animosities, the positive factors which make for eventual recovery are numerous.

*

Unfortunately there has been in France a great deal of exaggeration owing to domestic quarrels, which tends to produce the conditions of panic which are foolishly proclaimed. The Radical Government was not well advised to stir up religious strife, for the offended Catholics are those whose aid, particularly in the form of subscriptions to loans, is essential. A "policy of combat" was initiated at a critical moment when French concord was called for just as urgently as in the War days. Both sides railed at each other and produced a *crise de confiance* that if continued may prove to be fatal for France. One side denounced the other as preparing the way for Communism; the other side declared its antagonists to be Fascistes who were preparing a *coup d'état*. How could confidence be maintained?

France should postpone her political controversies to a more fitting season; they are of secondary importance and can wait until they can be indulged in with safety. Those who appeal for a truce until financial stability is restored are right. The financial problem is in reality a political problem. While Frenchmen are divided into two clans who think only of defeating each other, the country must suffer.

The common sense of the French people will surely assert

itself. Communist campaigns, Socialist campaigns, Clerical campaigns, and sensational and alarming speeches which suggest that France is once more in danger of being overrun by Germany, should cease. Never was the economic situation of France more prosperous. There is an excess of exports over imports; there is work for everybody; the Budget is being balanced; and sounder financial methods have been adopted. The collection of taxes is much more efficient than it has been, and, in fact, the amounts received surpass the estimates.

Temporary Treasury difficulties can always be overcome. A great deal of commotion which has been created is entirely artificial. During the War there was invented a new crime – that of *défaitisme*. Since the War we have heard from time to time of "financial défaitisme." The *défaitistes* are to be found not in one camp but in all camps. At the same time there should be no question of suppressing unfavourable opinions or of taking arbitrary action against those who do not take the official roseate view.

Unless the French lose faith in themselves, unless Governments behave with incredible stupidity, unless French citizens refuse to impose upon themselves whatever sacrifices may be called for, there is no financial danger for France. France cannot afford to play any more tricks or to indulge in idle speculations of help from Germany, or America, or any other country. France must rely upon her own efforts, and the country must display that courage, wisdom and steadfastness which have never been found wanting in France in an emergency. Financial "Marnes," financial "Verduns" must be fought. But they will be fought in the spirit that always conquers.

Since 1914 France has gone through great tribulations; she has been tested as perhaps no country has in the history of the world been tested. It is easy to criticize her because she has come out of the fray with tattered garments and with gaping

wounds; but one should rather praise her because she emerges undaunted and, after taking breath, after repairing her robes, is resolved to continue the march in her accustomed place in the vanguard of Civilization.